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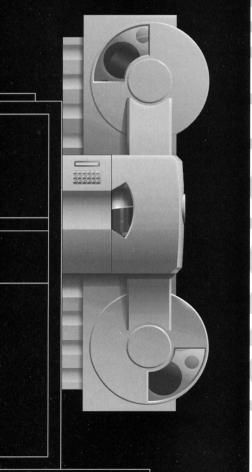
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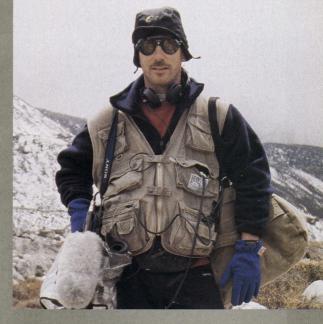
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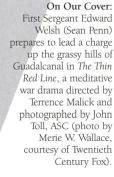
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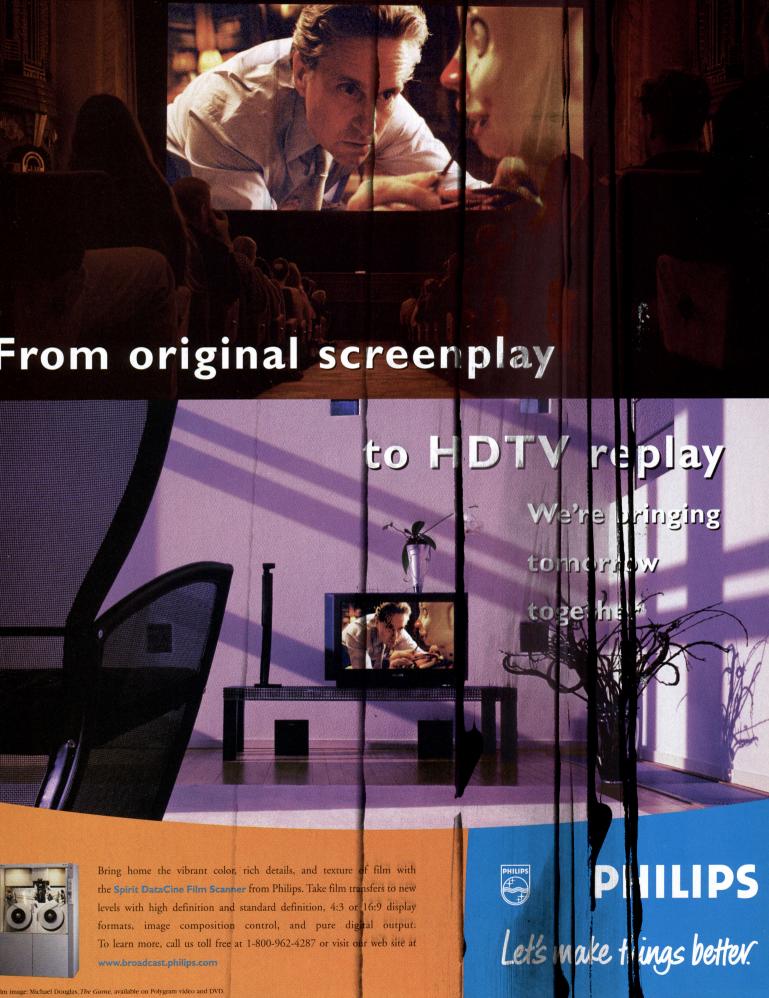
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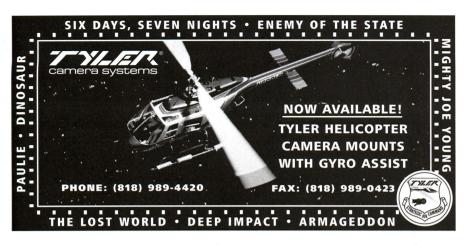
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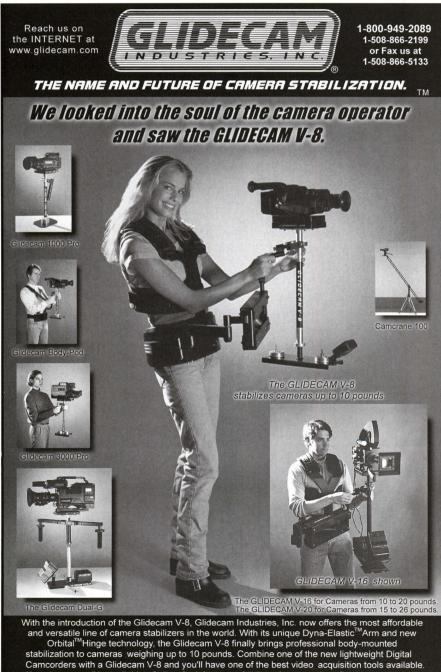
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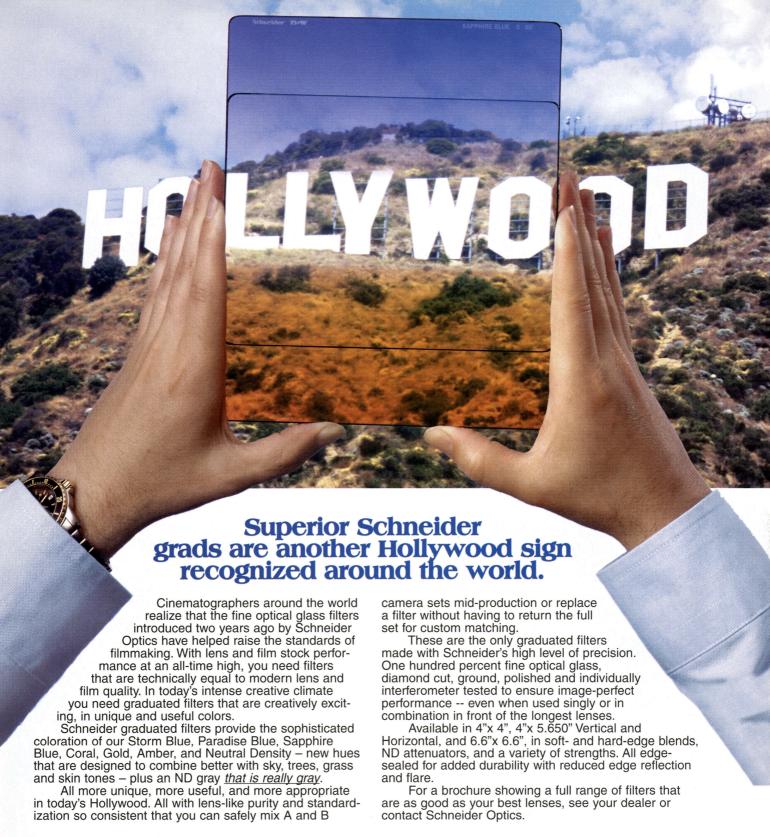
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Editor's Note



In 1973, the release of Terrence Malick's *Badlands* signaled the arrival of an important new cinematic talent. Based on the infamous 1958 killing spree by Charles Starkweather and Caril-Ann Fugate, Malick's first feature film (which benefitted from stark and evocative photography by Tak Fujimoto, ASC, Stevan Larner, ASC and Brian Probyn) turned the simple tale of two slow-witted serial killers into a moody and mythical meditation on ennui in the American midwest. A consummate example of "Seventies cinema," *Badlands* earned critical kudos and a devoted cult following, and is now widely recognized as a classic picture.

Five years later, Malick returned with the equally impressive *Days of Heaven*. Featuring some of the most exquisite images ever committed to film (by Nestor Almendros, ASC and Haskell Wexler, ASC), the picture earned several Best Director prizes and an Oscar for Best Cinematography.

Soon after this triumph, however, Malick left the film industry for 20 years, fueling intense speculation about his whereabouts and activities. The reclusive director has finally returned with *The Thin Red Line*, a keenly felt and visually eloquent adaptation of James Jones's acclaimed war novel. From its ominous opening metaphor of a crocodile easing into action, the film is a riveting experience that uses the Battle of Guadalcanal as a backdrop for a host of philosophical questions about human nature. The picture's lyrical imagery showcases the expertise of two-time Academy Award winner John Toll, ASC, who offered *AC* his thoughts on both Malick's methods and his own techniques ("The War Within," p. 42).

This issue also features a salute to another of cinema's finest cameramen, Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC, who has been selected to receive the American Society of Cinematographers' Lifetime Achievement Award ("A Transcendent Career Foretold," p. 30). Through the years, Vilmos has earned the respect, admiration and friendship of his peers; here's wishing him many more years of success.

Since our theme this month is shooting on location, we've gone far and wide to explore the challenges of non-studio filming. In addition to Mr. Toll's memories of Australia and Guadalcanal, we've gathered a compelling account from director Tony Bui and cinematographer Lisa Rinzler, who traveled to Bui's native country of Vietnam to film the artful *Three Seasons* ("Culture Clash," p. 64). *ACs* correspondents also interviewed the filmmakers behind *Waking Ned Devine*, a charming comedy set on the Isle of Man (Global Village, p. 10), and *The Red Violin*, a tale that follows a hand-crafted musical instrument on a 400-year journey through Australia, Canada, China, England and Italy (Production Slate, p. 16).

This edition of AC also presents insightful pieces on the Panavision/Frazier Lens system ("Seeing is Believing," p. 88) and the hit TV show Felicity ("Big-City Girl," p. 76), for which cinematographer Robert Primes, ASC skillfully combines studio and location work to create a compelling New York groove.

Sincerely,



Stephen Pizzello Executive Editor

e-mail: stephen_pizzello@cinematographer.com

ON FILM

JAMES BAGDONAS, ASC

"At this point in my career, my perspective on lighting has changed from years ago. With the assistance of modern Kodak film stocks that reproduce images more accurately and consistently than ever before, the evolution in my lighting style has become more instinctive and less calculated. I can now light more with my eye and less with the meter and have the confidence that film will always reproduce the image as my mind's eye sees it. Standing back, lighting a scene, I know it is complete not when there is nothing left to add, but instead when there is nothing left to take away. What an amazing time. With today's filmmaking tools we are unlimited, which makes me feel so fortunate to be a cinematographer."

James Bagdonas has earned four ASC Outstanding Achievement Award nominations, two for *Chicago Hope*, and the others for *Hunter* and *Hidden in America*. He also received two Emmy nominations for *Chicago Hope* and one for *Hidden in America*. His other credits include *Lois and Clark*, *Love Songs*, *Come Die With Me*, *Conagher*, *American Heart* and other movies-of-the-week and long form features.

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Global Village

Braving the Isle of Man by Naomi Pfefferman

It's a fact of filmmaking that actors often have to endure harsh weather for the sake of artistry. Waking Ned Devine director Kirk Jones knows this all too well, recalling the heart-stopping moment when a gust of wind nearly propelled his 70-year-old star, lan Bannen, off the edge of a cliff.

The cast and crew were on location on Britain's Isle of Man, the perfect setting for Jones's charming comedy about two old codgers (Bannen and David Kelly) determined to sniff out a big lottery winner in their sleepy Irish village. On a dark and stormy night, Jackie O'Shea (Bannen) braves the elements to visit lottery regular Ned Devine — who, he discovers, has died of shock while clutching the winning ticket.

"For the wide shot of Ned's cottage, we had to shoot very near the edge of a steep, 400-foot drop," recalls first-time filmmaker Jones, 34, a prominent British commercial director. "We made it as safe as we could, but the wind machine was so powerful that lan blew back toward the precipice. Fortunately, he sank to his knees, and we managed to turn the machine off. But for a moment there, I thought he was going to get blown over the edge."

The director was inspired to write *Devine* after reading an amusing newspaper item about a rural postmistress whose neighbors thought she had won the lottery. However, finding the right location for the fictional village of Tully More (population 52) wasn't easy.

Jones initially wanted to set his Irish yarn in Southern Ireland, where he had spent three months completing the script, as well as absorbing "the dialect, the accents and the characters. While in Ireland, I was also looking for a village



where I could shoot the film, but I never quite found it. There were plenty of tiny villages, but they tended to be spread out along a road, which would have been difficult to capture in one shot."

Enter Jones's producers, who had learned that The Isle of Man Film Commission offered even better incentives than Ireland for a small production like *Devine*. Isle officials agreed to provide tax benefits and one-quarter of the movie's \$3.5 million budget. "They were very keen on the film, because even in script form it was clear that we would make the island look very beautiful," states Jones, who visited the Isle in February of 1997.

After several hours of scouting,

Jones drove over the brow of a hill and came across the perfectly preserved museum village of Cregneash, which he describes as "a cluster of incredibly charming barns and cottages set on a hill with the sea as a backdrop. I thought, 'This is it. This is what I had in mind.'"

During production, which took place in August and September of 1997, Isle officials allowed Jones to use his own crew and to take over the entire village. The director managed to win over the less-than-enthusiastic locals, who eventually served as extras, by telling them the film's story.

Since Jones wanted his movie to have a look of "heightened reality," he utilized existing farmhouses and barns



Lotos courtous of Box Coorchlight

equipment to the end of a slippery peninsula.

Top: The men of

Tully More make Ned Devine the

toast of the town.

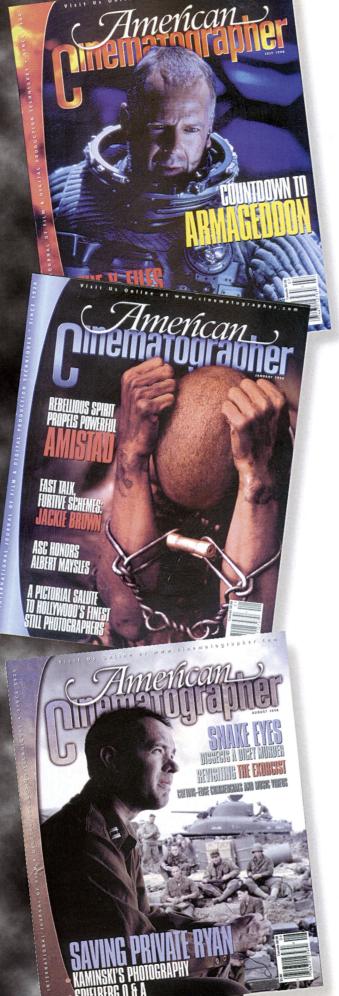
Bottom: While

dream sequence,

crew members

form a "human chain" to pass

working on a surreal seaside



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Cinematographer Henry Braham (with walkie-talkie) supervises a scenic setup.

for exteriors. For authenticity's sake, the whitewashed museum-village buildings were done up in a muddy-green wash.

Almost all of the interiors were shot in existing buildings: Fisherman Ned Devine's house, for example, was set in a tiny cottage overlooking the sea. Whenever the actors opened the front door, the camera was able to capture the cove and the sparkling water below.

Two other key sets, Jackie's farm-house and the village pub, were built within barns in Cregneash. The walls were smeared with uneven plaster, then papered with vintage 1970s wallpaper to look like the rural homes Jones had seen during his travels in Ireland.

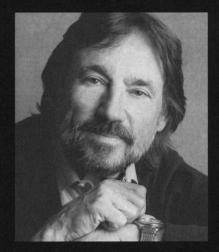
To enhance the impression of dark, cozy interiors, cinematographer Henry Braham, BSC (The Land Girls, Shooting Fish and Roseanna's Grave see AC March '97 for coverage on the latter) drew upon the paintings of Rembrandt, especially the Dutch artist's self-portraits. "The background is dark but the subject is illuminated by a warm light that allows you to see very clearly into the character," says the 34-year-old cameraman, who has previously worked with Jones on a number of commercials. With his aperture set at T4.5 or 5.6, Braham often lit indoor night scenes with one or two 1K space lights placed very close to the actors.

Even when it was possible, Braham refused to float the walls to allow extra space for his Panavision cameras. "I don't like taking the camera out of the set, because that is rarely believable," affirms the cinematographer, who instead would back the camera up against a wall. "One trick that helped was to slightly oversize the sets, because as long as you know which lens you're going to use, you can give yourself enough room to track the camera around without having to take out the walls."

Braham arrived in Cregneash for the 34-day shoot with two Panaflex GII outfits and Primo lenses, along with heater blankets designed by Panavision to protect the lenses in case of bad weather. To handle the Isle's changeable weather, he employed Kodak's 200 ASA EXR 5293 stock for interiors and Vision 250D 5246 for exteriors. For lighting exteriors, he mainly utilized two 18K HMIs and four 6K HMI Cinepars; interiors were illuminated with Kino Flo Wall-O-Lites and space lights.

During prep, Jones rewrote several scenes to take advantage of the Isle's rugged beauty. A surreal dream sequence, for example, was moved from a ballroom to a boat on the sunlit sea. "To do the sequence, 16 of us had to form a human chain to pass the equipment down to the end of a slippery, dangerous peninsula covered in seaweed and slime," the director explains. "The equipment was then carried by boat to a spot further down the peninsula that we couldn't get to on foot. The tide was coming in and we only had about 25 minutes to get the shot. We literally shot to the last moment. If we had left five minutes later, we would have been underwater."

When Jones reworked the script to include a shot of a seal on an island off the Isle's coast, Braham embarked on the shoot's most precarious endeavor. "I took my camera operator, focus puller and loader out to the island one morning at 5 a.m. on this fishing boat driven by a salty old fisherman who thought we'd gone bonkers," the cinematographer recalls. "The sea was very rough, the boat stank of fish, and all of my chaps were quite



VILMOS ZSIGMOND, ASC

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that has touched and inspired humanity,
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www.kodak.com/go/motion © Eastman Kodak Company, 1999 Kodak is a trademark. green [around the gills]. We took only minimal equipment — no lights and just the long zoom — and by lunchtime we'd gotten several shots. We'd also fallen flat on our faces numerous times, cutting ourselves to shreds on the barnacles."

While the island's elements provided dramatic seascapes and sunsets, it also demanded clever improvising on the cinematographer's part. "One thing about shooting on an island in the middle of the Irish Sea is that the

weather changes fantastically quickly," notes Braham, who frequently consulted with forecasters during production.

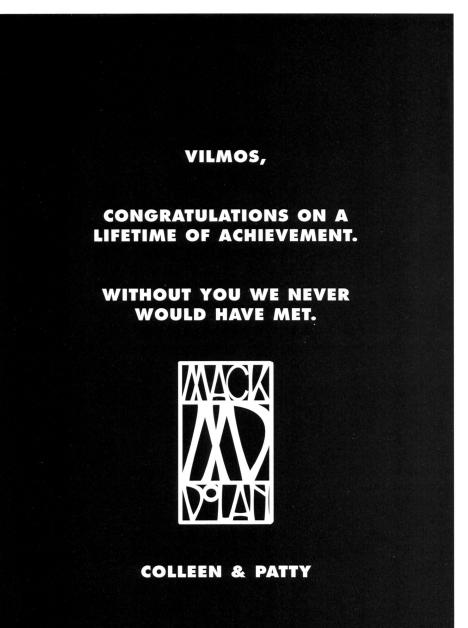
The cameraman had wanted to shoot *Waking Ned Devine*'s funeral sequence in bright sunlight, but the sequence wound up being filmed in conditions that ranged from sun to fog to thunderstorms. "It was almost pitch black outside when we shot the funeral service inside the church," says Braham, "so I matched the exposure of the inte-

rior for the exterior and was careful not to show too much of the windows in the frame."

Another comical sequence provided a very different kind of challenge for 69-year-old actor David Kelly, who portrays Michael O'Sullivan, a man whose impersonation of Ned Devine allows the villagers to cash in on the dead man's lottery ticket. When the lottery official pays an unexpected visit to the village, O'Sullivan, who had been skinny-dipping, hops on a motorcycle and races to Ned's house — buck naked. Filming of the scene gave two elderly local women, who were driving by in a Mini, quite a shock. "We were towing him on a motorcycle rig, but it was still quite scary for him because he'd never ridden a motorbike before and we were traversing these windy little country roads," remembers Braham, who shot the sequence with a Steadicam. "It was September, and he was freezing his behind off. Plus, we had to ask him to remove the special body stocking we had designed for privacy; it didn't work because I could see it in the frame, and it kept causing him to slide around dangerously on the seat of the motorbike."

Waking Ned Devine ends with a breathtaking aerial shot of the protagonists toasting the late Devine at the edge of a cliff. "Kirk and I scouted that location while flying around the island in a horrible, tiny airplane at 6 a.m. one morning," offers Braham, who did the helicopter camerawork himself. "I've never felt so sick in my life. Finally, we spotted this ideal location, which, it turned out, was impossible to get to on foot. We also couldn't do the shot for two days because the place was completely fogged-in.

"When the light finally broke, we knew we had to go for it. It was very windy, and the light was changing all the time. I kept picking the actors up and dropping them off, via the support helicopter, to line them up with the sun and the light on the water. What we hadn't counted on was how deep the heather was up there; it was knee-deep, and the elderly actors were struggling to walk around in it. We finally got the shot, but only by the skin of our teeth!"





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Production Slate

compiled by Andrew O. Thompson

Right: Nicolo Bussotti (Carlo Cecchi) puts the finishing touches on an accursed instrument in The Red Violin, a film set in five nations over a period of 400 years. Below: Musical prodigy Kasper Weiss (Christoph Koncz) demonstrates his bravura talents in an Austrian orphanage.



All the World's A Stage by Mark Dillon

The Red Violin traces the 400year-long journey of a consummate fiddle crafted in the 17th-century Italian workshop of Nicolo Bussotti (Carlo Cecchi). Over the course of several generations, the violin changes numerous hands: from an orphaned Austrian prodigy to a lustful English virtuoso to a Chinese party official with a traitorous affection for Western music. The bewitched instrument casts a strange spell over all who possess it, ultimately wreaking misfortune on their lives.

Directed by French-Canadian François Girard and photographed by Alain Dostie, The Red Violin earned Genie Award nominations for Best Picture, Best Direction, and Best Cinematography. And with a budget of \$9 million, the film is an epic by Canadian production standards — a joint venture of Canada's Rhombus Media and Italy's Mikado Productions, with New Line International and England's Channel 4 pitching in a substantial funding.

To help ensure visual authenticity (and global marketability), The Red Violin was shot on location in the five respective countries where the story takes place — England, Italy, Austria, China and Canada — and combines English subtitles with native tongues. The film's episodic structure is nothing new to Girard and Dostie, who shared an international success with the 1993 biographical feature Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould.

The director describes his association with Dostie, which includes TV and commercial work, as a valuable educational experience. Their relationship

keeps the director away from "the temptation of useless considerations and discussions, because [Alain] doesn't go there. His first interest is the film experience and what it means emotionally and intellectually. Alain is not just composing nice shots, he's making a film, and that's the greatest influence he's had on me. He and I would rarely discuss 'look' or 'aesthetic' but rather script, characters. and dialogue."

Dostie's career began in 1963, when he was hired as a camera assistant by the National Film Board of Canada. He quickly graduated to director of photography, shooting mostly Frenchlanguage shorts and documentaries. Since leaving the NFB, he has collaborated with some of the most esteemed Québecois directors, including Denvs Arcand, with whom he has made several socially-themed documentaries, and Robert Lepage, for whom he shot the 1995 feature Le Confessional, earning a previous Genie Best Cinematography nomination.

In preproduction on The Red Violin, the filmmakers were essentially prepping five movies at once. According to Dostie, the trick was not so much to





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The cursed violin leads a civilian (Liu Zi Feng) to an uncertain fate during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Québecois cameraman **Alain Dostie** photographed this rally sequence in Shanghai on the day prior to the 1997 Hong Kong handover.



give each episode its own distinct look, but rather to maintain a consistent style throughout. That would not have been such a tall order if the five episodes were presented in succession, but the film jumps back and forth across time frames. The opening scene, for instance, occurs in 17th-century Cremona, Italy, which then cuts to modern Montréal as expert appraiser Charles Morritz (Samuel L. Jackson) enters an auction hall. "Those scenes are 400 years apart, so my main concern was finding a 'period' look that would match that of today," says the cameraman.

Dostie accomplished this uniformity by keeping his techniques simple and regularly consulting with production designer François Séguin (Jesus of Montreal. Love and Human Remains. Afterglow) and costume designer Rénee April (The Moderns, Black Robe, Map of the Human Heart) on the colors for props, sets, and clothing. Throughout the five seaments, the hues remain as homogeneous as possible, with a spare sense of color experimentation. The cinematographer's lighting followed suit: "There are a few moonlight effects that are colder, but otherwise, our color temperatures were either normal or on the warm side, with candles used for some of the period scenes. We tried to go more with vellowish or gold tones than red, but not too much so. And there was no lens filtration at all."

Even in one of the most recently

set sequences — China during the Cultural Revolution, circa 1965 — Dostie avoided combining color temperatures, and primarily utilized natural light coming through windows as motivation for his interior illumination. Fixtures visible in the frame — such as floor lamps — were deliberately left off. This strategy, coupled with the monochromatic tones of the Chinese sets and costumes, lends the episode a cold look.

To create this mood, Dostie drew upon personal experience: he visited China in 1973 — right after the Cultural Revolution — to shoot a documentary. He recalls, "All the clothes were bluegray. There were red flags, banners, and signs, but everything else was gray. People had no colors on them except the red Mao [Tse-Tung] arm band, and that's what we see on the screen in *The Red Violin*. But China has changed a lot in 25 years, and it's nothing like that today. I was shocked when I arrived there for preproduction."

The Chinese episode relates the story of party official Xiang Pei (Sylvia Chang), who finds herself in a precarious position. While she publicly denounces "decadent" forms of Western music, she secretly hides records of these same tunes in her home, along with another symbol of the capitalist culture — the red violin.

The sequence's blue-gray hues depict a bleak and repressive era, even though *The Red Violin*'s script underwent careful scrutiny by present-day Chinese authorities. "We had discussions about the script with them," Girard recalls. "It was an intense diplomatic experience. We were almost ready to shoot, and then they refused access. While I was shooting in Montréal and Europe, [Rhombus producer] Niv Fichman went to China five times to fix things, and we ended up shooting in Shanghai."

Once the Chinese granted clearance to the production, the local officials were more than helpful. Tensions did run high, however, because the shooting schedule overlapped with the July 1, 1997 handover of Hong Kong. The film's massive Cultural Revolution rally sequence was shot just one day before

the anxious occasion. "There were tons of journalists everywhere to report on the Chinese mainland side of the event," Girard recollects. "The authorities were scared that they would see what we were doing and report it, and that a photo of a 'Cultural Revolution'-style event would end up in an American newspaper." As a safeguard against this possible misrepresentation, the entire neighborhood where this scene's filming took place was blocked off by 300 Chinese police officers.

Since Dostie utilized practicals only in the Montréal sequence, much of the film was shot in very low light levels, especially the Cremona episode with its numerous night shots and candlelit scenes. As a result, the cinematographer primarily employed Kodak's Vision 500T 5279 stock, along with Eastman's 200 ASA EXR 5293 and 100 ASA EXR 5248. "We used the Vision for a lot of the interiors," Dostie concedes. "It's so good compared to what was available in the past. I remember when we used to use the fast stock only when there was no other possibility, but now I don't think you can see a difference in the grain or contrast like you could before."

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing *The Red Violin*'s nomadic, 15-member main unit was adjusting to each new nation and the various technicians who would be hired. Details Dostie, "We'd finish [shooting] in Italy one evening and then catch a flight to England. It was almost like doing different films, and we had to adapt [to each nation's working methods]. You don't ask the crew to change; they are as they are, and it's up to you to reach them."

After completing principle photography in Montréal, the production stopped in Austria for the 18th-century episode, in which musical prodigy Kasper Weiss (Christoph Koncz) forms an unusual attachment to the red violin at his monasterial orphanage. Here, Dostie found that the Old World aesthetics of Austrian architecture were not as filmfriendly as he'd hoped. "We tend to think that it's easier to do period pieces in Europe, if only because it's old," he opines. "You can easily shoot in the open

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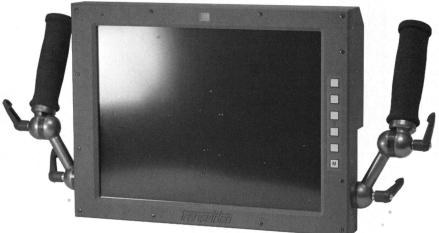
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country, but when you get into a city, you have to redo everything. Nothing is period [in design]. You have constantly to hide, remove and replace — and it's very expensive because Canadian money is worth nothing over there."

The initial excitement generated by Dostie's first location scout in Vienna gave way to the financial realities of filmmaking. "We were seeing wonderful streets and huge squares," he recalls, "but when François Séguin came and we started to look at things more closely, we found that it would be too expensive to bring in all the lights and lamp posts that we wanted to use."

However, the historic Austrian capital offered an embarrassment of riches in terms of interiors. For required locations such as a library and a prince's palace, Vienna offered several options. But for those exteriors that could not be achieved practically, the filmmakers called upon the CGI artistry of Montréalbased BUZZ Image Group. The most spectacular example is a synthetic vista of Vienna circa 1792, seen as a carriage approaches the city. While shooting, "we had this little hill in the country outside of Vienna — its was green, with one tree and the carriage going up the side," says Dostie. "The camera also craned up about three or four feet."

To create the temporal illusion, a photo of present-day Vienna was taken from the window of the Hilton Hotel. The modern buildings were erased and replaced with a matte painting of an 18th century cityscape, which was then composited with the original carriage footage.

Dostie utilized Arriflex 535 cameras throughout the production, and per Girard's preference, more than half the film was shot with 20mm and 65mm lenses. "They create much less distortion," he explains. "The 20mm is a beautiful lens, and the 65mm is great for close-ups — it has nice separation. When we went outside of those lenses there was a reason for it, although I tend to get away from the 35mm or the 28mm." The director always deploys prime lenses, claiming that in his entire 15-year career he has "used zooms"

maybe twice, and that was to avoid lens changes. I don't think I've ever used a zoom in a shot." He prefers camera motion to lens adjustment, and a dolly was employed on virtually every setup. "We always have track," the director says. "I really think the way you read space is by moving. It's the prerogative of cinema to move. A still shot drives me crazy." Most shots in the film employ a creeping dolly. "I'm a 'creep' fanatic." he continues. "I like to get closer without noticing we're moving, or where you feel that it's moving a bit. You create a tension there." Dostie offers jokingly, "I don't think François knows what the tripod is. He doesn't want to know."

Kidding aside, the mutual admiration shared by these two filmmakers is quite evident, and Girard had nothing but high praise for Dostie: "No matter what, he and his gaffer, Daniel Chretien, who is a real master, were rock-steady. Alain is a very intense artist."

Effecting Alien Automatons by Ron Magid

John Bruno may be the only effects artist in history to willingly sacrifice two Academy Awards in order to become a feature-film director After earning an Oscar for his work on James Cameron's CGI breakthrough movie The Abyss, Bruno began researching and designing the visual effects for Terminator 2: Judgment Day. Before that film began shooting, however, Bruno left the project to pursue a directing gig on a personal project of his, a classic Western. When that production went south, Bruno resumed his thriving visual-effects career at Boss Film, picking up subsequent Oscar nominations for Batman Returns and Cliffhanger before reteaming with Cameron for True Lies, which netted Bruno yet another Academy nomi-

Interestingly, Universal Studios and producer Gale Anne Hurd approached Bruno with the prospect of directing *Virus* just before he was to start prepping *Titanic* with Cameron. "At that time, I was the visual effects supervisor on



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Titanic," Bruno recalls, "and I got a call from Jim saying, 'Next weekend, we're going to Halifax Nova Scotia, but you can't tell a soul where you're going — not Universal, not Gale, no one.' I just 'disappeared' and ended up with Jim, his brother Mike, Al Giddings and Louis Abernathy for 31 days in the North Atlantic, during which time 12 dives were made on the Titanic." Bruno himself was aboard for two of the 12,378' descents — joining an elite group of only 35 living souls who have visited the ship since she sank in 1912.

ian research ship at sea. There, the energy force takes over the vessel's robotics lab to build machines that build even bigger and deadlier machines to combat what it thinks to be the titular infection: mankind.

Virus quickly became an unusually complex production due to the film's extensive effects work. In the end, though, Bruno's picture succeeds on its own terms and boasts Academy Awardlevel effects, the deft handiwork of such diverse outfits as Visionart, Fantasy II and Tippett Studio, with some extensive



Capt. Everton (Donald Sutherland) has a close encounter with Goliath, a grotesque biomechanical creation, in *Virus*. Director John Bruno sought to infuse the fantastic film with a sense of realism by making extensive use of full-scale animatronic creatures. However, the Goliath rig proved to be too heavy to achieve certain movements, so the beast was also rendered as a CG creation by Tippett Studio.

"All of our time was spent working scenes through and talking about what kind of effects would be needed," Bruno recalls, "and Jim kept asking me, 'Are you going to do *Virus* or are you going to do *Titanic*?'

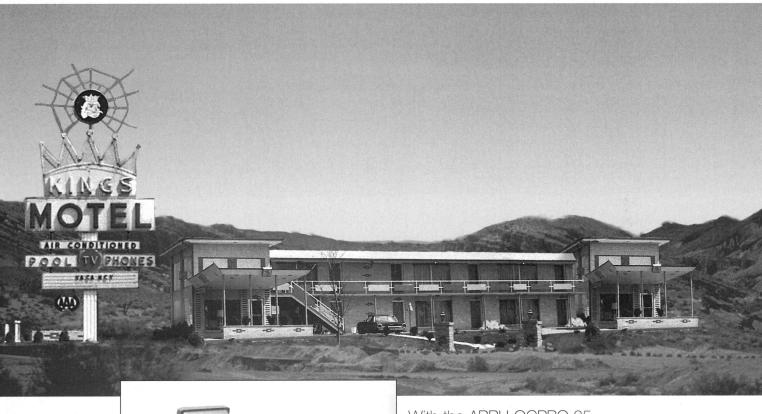
After reworking the *Virus* screenplay — largely a matter of incorporating many his personal experiences of diving on the *Titanic* wreck and working on a Russian research vessel — Bruno pitched a revised version of the project to Universal. After they accepted his ideas, Bruno quickly replaced himself on *Titanic* with friend Rob Legato, and the rest is, as they say, history.

Pure action-adventure entertainment, *Virus* is based on the popular Dark Horse Comics title of the same name, which tells the tale of an electrical alien entity that destroys the *Mir* space station and is accidentally beamed onto a Russ-

practical robotics provided by both Steve Johnson's company, XFX, and All Effects.

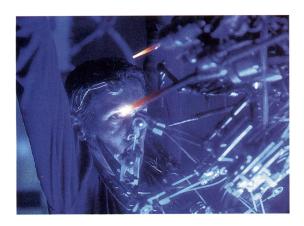
Bruno assigned Gene Warren Jr.'s Burbank, California-based Fantasy II (The Terminator. The Beast) to build the models and handle the myriad shots involving the film's Vladislav Volkov satellite-tracking ship, as well as the tugboat that brings our heroes face to face with the extraterrestrial terror aboard the decidedly Russian spy vessel. Once again, Cameron's presence was eerily felt: the Volkov was actually cannibalized from the remains of the doublehulled Benthic Explorer miniature used in The Abyss. "In order to copy the fullscale Volkov — which was actually the redressed U.S.S. Vandenburg — we reconverted the 42' Benthic hull by adding another 5'10"," Warren explains. "We built everything above the hull and, in fact, reworked the hull, but we had the

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Above: Kelly (Jamie Lee Curtis) is menaced by the cvbernetic creature. Right: **Director John** Bruno (center) confers with actor Sherman Augustus, XFX animatronicdesign supervisor Eric Fiedler and **BioAlexi** supervisor Dave Snyder.

basic structure."

Per his general preference (and that of his father before him), Warren and his sons filmed all of *Virus*'s miniature ships in-camera, or, in the case of the *Volkov*, partly on location. "I'm always in favor of getting as much right there as you can — within reason," Warren states. "The opening shots of the movie, with the *Volkov* at sea silhouetted by the sun, was our miniature. We shot that sequence on the ocean in January of 1997. Those were the first cameras rolling on the movie, two months before principal started.

"We transported the Volkov model and a large crane down to San Pedro and put them on a 150' barge, then spent the weekend detailing and dressing the model. The barge left San Pedro at sundown for an all-night trip up the coast to Paradise Cove. John, the crew, and I left in the middle of the night from Marina Del Rey to meet it about an hour before sun up. Then we put the thing in the water and rigged 15 marine batteries to run the 160 very hot, powerful quartz lights on the ship. There were actually four people inside it — one pyro guy and three of our people — to turn the lights on and all of that stuff. We put some side-mover propellers, which are used for docking boats, on the model, and those props kept it turned in the right perspective and put the sun where we wanted it to backlight the different shots."

Shooting the almost 48', ½1-scale Volkov miniature was like filming a small yacht. "We shot most of the daytime stuff using Kodak's 5298 with an 85 and maybe a 3.0 ND filter," Warren recalls.

"That gave us more stop when we were shooting the miniatures in daytime. We wanted more depth of field with the water in the foreground, and the 98 enabled us to stop down and still keep everything sharp. The entire daytime opening sequence was shot handheld from boats alongside the barge, including all those explosions. I operated one of the Mitchell 600s, as did both of my sons, Gene Warren III and Chris Warren. John Huneck, an old friend who got his

that John wanted," recalls Warren. "Falls Lake is so big that all of the wind machines, lights, cameras and other equipment have to go on barges. There's also a 10 p.m. curfew — it just demands unwarranted time and expense. I was convinced that we could build a tank tailored to create the giant storm that John wanted and still be cost-efficient. We made it the right size for what we were doing, and it was very user-friendly. It measured 104' by 100' and was 20' at

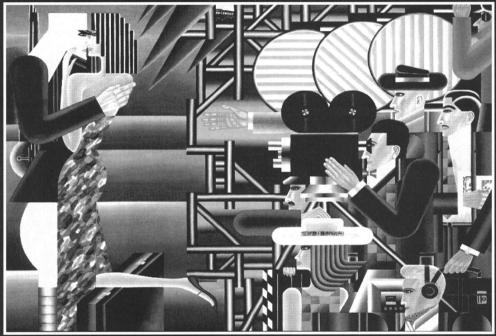


first job in the business in the late Sixties from my father, picked up the fourth camera. We did it all in a seat-of-ourpants, guerrilla style, and we got some nice, gritty, realistic footage. It doesn't look too controlled."

Control was an issue while shooting the destruction of one of the Volkov's dish antennas, which occurs when the alien force beams down from the Mir. It was pyro on the high seas. "All those exterior shots at the beginning of the movie — with the explosions on the top when it gets zapped — that was all shot out there, all in-camera," Warren says proudly. The rest of the miniature shoot, involving the Volkov model and a 1/6scale tugboat and barge that Fantasy II's modelers built from scratch, then moved into a water tank that Warren had specially constructed for Virus. "The production hoped we could use Falls Lake, but the action needed to take place in a Class 5 hurricane, and I didn't think we could create the huge waves there its deepest point, with a 38'-tall concrete dumptank at one end that made huge, 6' waves. When we dumped the water, it hit the back wall and then came back, so we got 20 to 30 seconds of what looked-like real ocean swells. If we'd put a full-scale boat in there, the waves would have looked 6' high, but we were working at 1/6 scale, with a 171/2' tugboat and a 26' barge, so we had the equivalent of 30' waves. We were in the water, out of the water, flying overhead on camera rigs for months and months, and it was nearly all night work.

"I'm happy with the results," Warren continues. "It's probably the best miniature ships-in-a-storm scenes ever done. There have been a couple of good shots before, but these are *sequences*. It doesn't look like a tank, even when we put actors in there. We shot Billy Baldwin and Jamie Lee Curtis waiting to be rescued by the helicopter, and they looked as if they were in 3' swells. That was the last footage shot for the movie

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— a year and a half after we had shot the very first frames!"

In-between, Fantasy II also handled the motion-control photography of the ill-fated *Mir*, a miniature constructed by Mike Joyce at Acme Models and finished by Warren's crew. Visionart supplied a 3-D Earth and CG starfield background and took care of all the 2-D compositing using Silicon Grail's Chalice system. Visionart also took on the unenviable task of designing and

creating the electrical entity that destroys the space station. "We were trying to create something different, bizarre-looking, elegant and interesting to watch," Bruno reveals. "It became this electrical being, 500 to 600' across, that smashes into the *Mir.*"

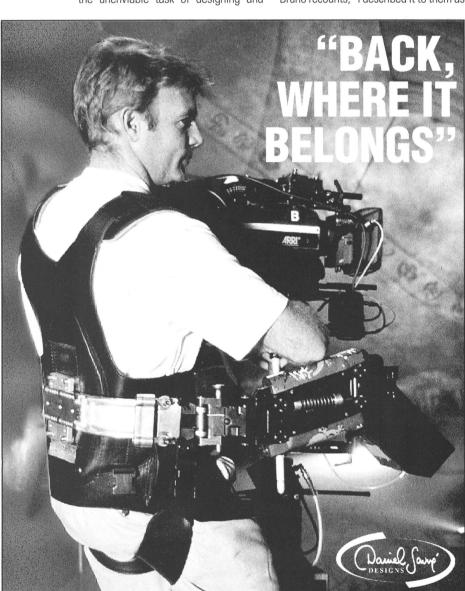
As with Fantasy II's work, Visionart had to finish their job in January of 1997. Of primary concern was the design and execution of the alien energy entity. Bruno recounts, "I described it to them as

a multi-layered expansion of the energy ribbon seen in *Star Trek: Generations*, but it couldn't really look like that, so I asked them to suggest some ideas with illustrations."

Recalls Visionart head Josh Rose, "Luckily, we have a brilliant art director and traditional artist, Robert Tom, who did several depictions based on John's descriptions. Then John picked two of Robert's designs, which our 3-D supervisor, Todd Boice, blended together to come up with the entity, this living, breathing, evil electrical life-form."

Bruno wanted the entity to appear virtually imperceptible in the distance, then head toward the Mir with frightening velocity and a sense of malevolent purpose, almost like a living creature. "John wanted it to look like an outer-space phenomena that still resembled a life-form," Rose confirms. "Its core was a 3-D model, but all of its textures were created out of particle systems. We knew we couldn't get the consistency of shape and motion we wanted purely with particles, so we chose to build and render all of the textures out of particles and then apply them to the 3-D model that gave us our basic structure and animation. But our renderer only rendered the part of the model that was covered by opaque or semi-opaque particles, so the fact that the edges are very unclear, and constantly moving and shifting, was actually a byproduct of the render. We then did the usual compositing tricks to make it look smokier, and added some arcing electricity inside. That electrical animation was set up as a random animation cycle inside Prisms, and a rough low-res model of the Mir became an attractor for those lightning bolts and particle debris. As our entity model was covering the Mir, lightning would strike the space station. It also left a trail of particles surrounding it, which got sucked back up into the entity. We also did all of the arcing effects when the entity first comes aboard the Volkov. assumes the form of arcing energy and kills a couple of people."

"It's a life-form that we don't understand, but it's visually cool," Bruno remarks. "It makes sense that it travels



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around the ship by electrical means, gets into the computer, figures out ones and zeros and learns everything about us and our planet. It then comes up with a dictionary definition for what these things are that are trying to kill it, which is 'virus' — it thinks we are a virus."

The entity strikes back by building ever-more-destructive machines and endowing them with its own alien intelligence. The genius behind all of the malevolent machines was Bruno's old Boss Film colleague Steve Johnson, whose company, XFX (Species, Eraser), created an ever-changing armada of nine radio-controlled and puppeted droids. "They were built to look like things from nature — lobsters, crabs, spiders, and even a dog droid." Bruno says. "We also had a flying droid that looked exactly like the cover of the Virus comic book, so it would be reminiscent of the source material. We had crab legs for lunch one day, and I said, 'Let's save all those parts and re-dress some of these droids!' Everything was used and re-used and reused again.

"I wanted full-sized creatures so our actors could react directly to them," Bruno reasons. "The first time they saw one was when a robot came smashing through the wall of a corridor in front of them. We had blood and meat hanging all over it, and [actress] Joanna Pakula was really upset by the look of the thing. Donald Sutherland said he was so upset that he needed to be by himself for a little while. Our actors weren't reacting to a wad of tape on top of a wooden stick that said 'monster here' — they were reacting to real things."

Helping to add an edge of reality was Australian director of photography David Eggby, ACS, whose credits include the cult-classic *Mad Max*, as well as the effects-heavy *Dragonheart* (See *AC* June 1996).

Meanwhile, Johnson continued to recycle droids for the next level of their evolution, the biomechanoids, which utilized parts and pieces of the *Volkov's* ill-fated crew. "Steve did some excellent

work on what we called the 'BioAlexi,' the Russian captain who gets modified," Bruno explains. "He's a full-on hydraulic puppet. That broke down into the biospine — a puppet of the head and neck of the BioAlexi — which was manually operated from under a table. Also, for the scene in which Donald Sutherland's character gets converted, we created the 'BioBob' by putting a mechanical casting of Sutherland's head on the BioAlexi body. That was re-dressed again with a video-camera head, in order to make what I called the 'Dr. Mengele' droid."

In the bizarre nightmare Bruno has devised, little droids busy themselves making 'biomechanoids,' which, in turn, combine to create larger droids. At the top of the evolutionary chain is the ultimate robotic inquisitor, 'Goliath.' The film climaxes with a life-or-death struggle between the remnants of the salvage tug's crew and the formidable Goliathseries robot, an ungodly assimilation of flesh and metal poised on four legs with multiple, lethal arms. "What we're talk-

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ing about is a mobile home for the creature," Bruno observes wryly, "a fighting machine that would weigh X amount of tons. When [writer] Dennis Feldman and I were forging the script, we knew the alien force would find things like elephants and insects in the biological files, and since heavy four-legged creatures are more stable and insects have multiple arms, this thing became a giant combination of an elephant and a mantis. It has four legs, two big hydraulic arms and two small claw-pincer arms, plus sort of a Swiss-Army-knife chest with all kinds of things on it, such as mandibles, little drills and knives. It's got a Nazi stormtrooper helmet for a head, with eight videocamera lenses and little spikes that come out of its face. It's all melded together from things that are on the ship, and it's protected by body-armor plating."

Goliath was constructed as a puppet/animatronic action prop by Eric Allard's All Effects (*Short Circuit, Alien Resurrection*). Measuring a staggering 12' x 12' and weighing several tons, the

prop was too heavy to be effectively puppeteered from beneath the elevated sets. Bruno made an emergency call to his friend and former ILM co-worker, animation maestro Phil Tippett, who was wrapping up *Starship Troopers* and was heavily involved in *My Favorite Martian*. Tippett agreed to animate more than 50 shots for Goliath's climactic rampage.

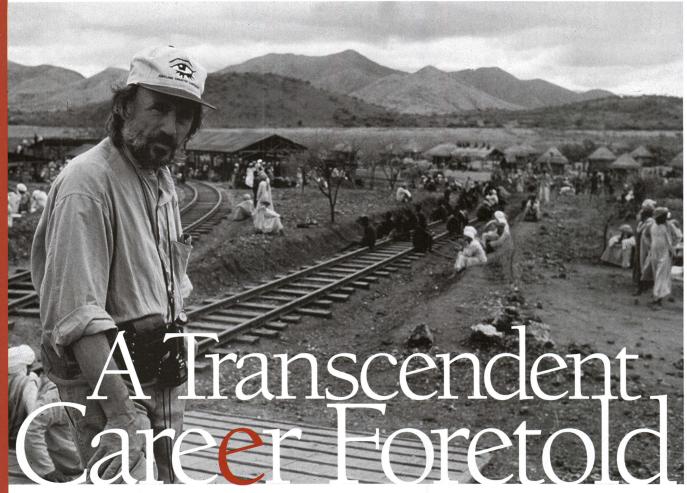
Modeling the complex prop in the computer was a logistical nightmare for Tippet Studio. "Craig Hayes took over the responsibility of matching it, bit by bit," Tippett says. "The modelmakers under his direction disassembled the original Goliath prop and scanned the pieces into the computer. It took nearly 15 weeks to put the model together and get the texture maps worked out. It was just a huge model; there were 982 pieces with a lot of articulation."

Tippett's animators, under the supervision of Tom Schelesny, brought the lumbering behemoth to life using a combination of keyframe and DID animation. Both techniques yielded convincing

animation suggesting real weight, scale and unbridled rage. "Since we had the full-scale prop, we looked at it and said, 'That's around 4,000 pounds, so what weighs that much?' A really big truck," Tippett relates. "Then it was a matter of manifesting that in the pantomime and making sure it had that feeling of power as it was lashing out. Another huge component is all of the cool lighting tricks that Julie Newdoll, our supervising technical director, was able to work in. The compositing department, headed by Zoe Peck, also contributed a tremendous amount of work, adding big arcs of electricity zapping off of Goliath."

The result is one of the finest CG creations since the dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park*; Goliath is a truly remarkable capper to a hair-raising directorial debut. "I was impressed by how well Phil's people matched the prop and the lighting," Bruno says proudly, "I called and told him I wanted to nominate him for President of the United States, but he declined."





The American Society of Cinematographers honors Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC with their 1998 Lifetime Achievement Award.

by Bob Fisher

fine-art gallery in Los Angeles recently featured an extraordinary display of still photographs taken by Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC (see "Still Lives, Distant Vistas," AC December 1998). The shots included a compelling self-portrait taken nearly 50 years ago in an empty field near

Szeged, Hungary, where Zsigmond was born and raised during the Nazi and Soviet occupations of his homeland. Five decades later, he explains his pensive stare: "A gypsy [fortune-teller] told me I was destined to sail on a ship across a great ocean to a big city, where I'd become an important artist."

It was a tantalizing prediction, because fortune-tellers were taken seriously in Szeged, but the notion puzzled Zsigmond, who had no experience with freedom. He couldn't even visit the next village without permission from the commissars, so Zsigmond didn't understand how he could sail across a great ocean and become an "important artist."

Yet within a few years, Zsigmond did cross the Atlantic Ocean and eventually made his way to Los Angeles, where he overcame seemingly impossible odds to become an influential cinematographer in the evolving art of filmmaking. His body of work currently consists of nearly 60 features, including such diverse pictures as McCabe & Mrs. Miller, Deliverance, Cinderella Liberty, The Long Goodbye, The Sugarland Express, The Witches of Eastwick, Maverick, The Rose, and The Ghost and the Darkness.

Considering this, it is no surprise that Zsigmond will become the 12th recipient of the American Society of Cinematographers' Lifetime Achievement Award, which will be presented to him at the Society's 13th annual ASC Outstanding Achievement Awards program, to be held at the Century Plaza Hotel in Century City on February 21.

However, this is not the first time that the cameraman has been recognized for his fine work. In 1977, Zsigmond earned an Academy Award for his stellar photography in Close Encounters of the Third Kind, and was later nominated for both The Deer Hunter (1978, for which he also won the BAFTA Award) and The River (1984). He earned an Emmy and an ASC Award in 1992 for his extraordinary camera-work on the HBO miniseries Stalin (AC May '93). Zsigmond was then presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at CamerImage '97, the International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography, held annually in Torun, Poland (AC April '98). Despite these an many other accolades, however, he is quick to maintain that the ASC Lifetime Achievement Award represents the pinnacle of his career, because the tribute comes from his peers and recognizes his entire body of work.

An innovator in his field, Zsigmond has frequently abandoned conventional thinking in favor of exploring unmapped territory. In McCabe & Mrs. Miller (1970), he "pre-flashed" the camera film to alter the contrast ratio, achieving what would become a widely emulated period look.

While filming Deliverance (AC Aug. 1971), Zsigmond and director John Boorman discussed whether they should shoot an important scene of the villains arriving in a canoe with a static or mobile camera. They decided that a camera on a tripod with a long lens made the tension more tactile. Zsigmond put a fluid head on the tripod and covered the camera with a plastic bag. The lens was only three or four inches above water level, recording the scene from a chillingly subjective perspective. The images provoked a premonition of primal terror; no dialogue was needed to announce that danger was approaching.

When Zsigmond was filming







Opposite: Zsigmond surveys his location in South Africa while filming the period thriller The Ghost and the Darkness in 1996 (see AC Nov. '96). This page, top: A youthful Zsigmond angles in with an Arriflex IIC while shooting a commercial in 1960. From left are Frank Gardony, future ASC fellow **Laszlo Kovacs** (working as Vilmos's capable first assistant), producer Ivan Nagy, an unidentified onlooker, and a sound man. Center: Zsigmond grabs a handheld shot with actors **Elliot Gould and** Nina Van Pallandt while shooting The Long Goodbye (1973), directed by Robert Altman. He and Altman had previously worked together on the 1970 film McCabe & Mrs. Miller (bottom, together with actor Warren Beatty), which proved to be both a pivotal film in the cameraman's career and an enduring example of exceptional cinematography.

A Transcendent Career Foretold

Right: Filming The Sugarland Express on location in San Antonio, Texas, in 1973, Zsigmond confers with (from left) stunt coordinator Carey Loftin, director Steven Spielberg, and first AD Jim Fargo, Below: A unique camera car utilized to shoot the film's many highspeed pursuit sequences; the rig was originally built for use on the film Bullitt. Spielberg is safely situated in the passenger's seat, while Zsigmond can be glimpsed riding between the twin **Panavised Arris**

up front.

The Sugarland Express (AC May '73) with director Steven Spielberg, he convinced Panavision founder Robert Gottschalk to personally deliver the first Panaflex camera to him on location in Texas. Zsigmond immediately put the camera on his shoulder and got into the back seat of a car. He pulled the audience deeper into the story by showing breathtaking action from the perspective of a passenger. "Steven wanted to direct sound in conjunction with the images,"

ASC LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

1998 — Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC

1997 — Victor Kemper, ASC

1996 — Owen Roizman, ASC

1995 — Sven Nykvist, ASC

1994 — Gordon Willis, ASC

1993 — Conrad Hall, ASC

1992 — Haskell Wexler, ASC

1991 — Philip Lathrop, ASC 1990 — Charles B. Lang, Jr., ASC

1989 — Stanley Cortez, ASC

1988 — Joe Biroc, ASC

1987 — George Folsey, ASC



Zsigmond says. "I needed a portable sound camera with reflex viewing that I could put on my shoulder."

The River (AC Nov. '84) opens with a nearly four-minute scene, which starts with a drop of rain that turns into a sprinkle and finally a torrent. The camera discovers the Garvey family in a desperate struggle to save their farm and, ultimately, their lives. Before a word of dialogue is spoken, the audience gains deep insights into the main characters. "I was lucky," Zsigmond says. "I was working with a visually oriented

director, Mark Rydell, who believed in telling stories with images. Dialogue should be like music. You should be able to follow the story even if it is turned down."

Later in the film, there is a powerful scene in which an ominous shadow crawls across the floor of a barn where Mae Garvey (Sissy Spacek) is desperately nursing a dying calf. The shadow is motivated by rays of light from the setting sun poking through spaces in the wall. The moving shadow defines the mood, acting as a silent witness to a



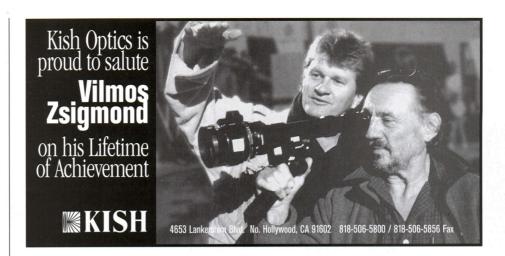
harsh reality.

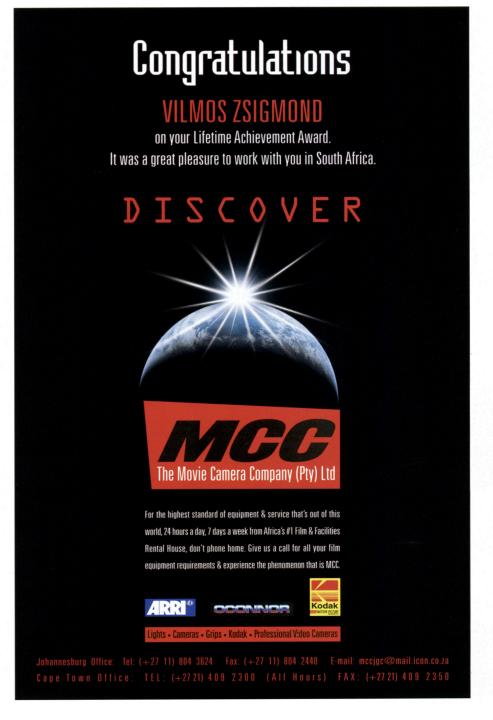
Zsigmond describes *The Rose*, also directed by Rydell, as "basically a light show. We wanted to re-create an era of rock 'n' roll concerts. The picture looked like documentaries of Janis Joplin concerts. We wanted the audience to see everything; nothing was hidden. That's how we made it intimate. The singer [Bette Midler] was vulnerable. That's why the audience loved her."

In *The Witches of Eastwick*, Zsigmond used colors to create a romantic and slightly surrealistic look. Jack Nicholson portrays the devil, who sets up house with three beautiful witches. Zsigmond manipulated color temperatures with the use of gels to bathe the devil in reddish tones, which were always motivated by identifiable sources. He contrasted those tones with cool, blue lighting that provided a visual signature for the witches.

In The Deer Hunter (AC Oct. '78), Zsigmond mixed smoke with hot, red light (motivated by steelmill furnaces) to create a hazy environment that made characters seem heroic. He explains that director Michael Cimino wanted the men in the story to seem both manly and believable. "You can see in the close-ups that it was hard, hot work, but the mill wasn't depicted as a dehumanizing environment," Zsigmond says. "If Michael improvised in staging, I picked it up and took his ideas a little bit further. Ideas bounced back and forth between us. It was like playing jazz music together. I love working with directors who see things visually and tell stories with images. I don't want to discount literary values — that's important — but first, I think, the visual part has to be there. If you want dialogue, you should read a book."

Zsigmond traces his interest in photography to a childhood illness. When he was 17 years old, Zsigmond was confined to bed for





A Transcendent Career Foretold

Top: Zsigmond checks his lighting on actor James Caan while filming Cinderella Liberty in Seattle, Washington, in May of 1973. The cameraman remembers that cinematography in the picture was influenced by Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC's work in Last Tango in Paris, which Zsigmond had recently seen. Middle: Behind the camera. Zsigmond sets up a shot for Close **Encounters of** the Third Kind with his crew while on location at Devil's Tower in Wyoming in June of 1976. **Director Steven** Spielberg can be seen lounging on a rock with actress Melinda Dillon in the upper left of the frame. **Bottom:** Zsigmond's efforts on Close **Encounters** were honored with an Academy Award, presented by actor Jon Voight and Sugarland Express star Goldie Hawn.







three months, and he read a book called *The Art of Light* by Eugene Dulovits. Zsigmond was fascinated by the concepts it presented, particularly the use of diffusion to alter the quality of light.

Although it wasn't apparent at the time, the book became the first step of a long journey. Zsigmond wanted to study engineering, but he was denied that opportunity because his family was considered bourgeois. His father coached a soccer team, and his mother managed a pub. In communist Hungary, people who owned anything were considered exploiters.

Zsigmond was disappointed, but not defeated. He saved enough money to buy a still camera, and taught himself how to take pictures. Soon thereafter, he organized a camera club and taught other workers how to take pictures. That impressed local authorities, who decided to send Zsigmond to the Academy for Theater and Film Art in Budapest to study cinematography. "The understanding was that after graduation, I would return to the factory to teach the other workers how to make movies," he recalls.

Zsigmond spent four years at film school, putting in many 14hour days and six-day weeks. While he deplored living under the tyranny of the communist government, he learned some great truths from the head of the department, György Illes, and other faculty members. "They taught us that a movie is only art if it has something important to say," Zsigmond recalls. "It should be more than entertainment. It should have social value." After completing his formal education, Zsigmond spent the year 1955 working as an assistant cameraman and operator at the state's film studio in Budapest.

In 1956, a popular uprising swept through the streets of the city. For a while, it looked as if the reformers would succeed in installing a more democratic government.



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VILMOS ZSIGMOND 1999 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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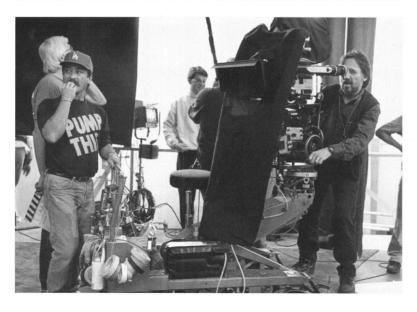
Thank you for that standard and congratulations on your LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD from the A.S.C.

A Transcendent Career Foretold

Top: Zsigmond jokes around with director Richard Donner while filming the comedic Western Maverick in 1993. The cameraman had a cameo in the picture as a turn-of-thecentury photographer. Center: Zsigmond discusses a shot with director Ivan Passer while shooting the 1992 HBO production Stalin. Ironically, Zsigmond who fled his homeland due to Soviet oppression returned to **Hungary and** later visited Moscow to shoot this telefilm. **Bottom: The** thriller Sliver (AC May '93) showcased Zsigmond's modern approach to glamour photography.







Zsigmond and Laszlo Kovacs, ASC, also a student at the film school, witnessed the conflict and decided it wasn't right to be bystanders. After borrowing a motion picture camera and a generous supply of film from the school, they hid the camera in a shopping bag and documented acts of bravery and desperation, including civilians attacking tanks with their bare hands and homemade weapons.

When the Soviet army crushed the revolt, Kovacs and Zsigmond holed up in an apartment waiting to see what would happen. Within a couple of days, Illes warned them that intellectuals were being arrested. Zsigmond and Kovacs decided it was time to leave. "The Russians were saying that the revolt was influenced by foreigners and staged by counterrevolutionaries," Zsigmond says. "We wanted the truth to come out."

The two friends made a run for the Austrian border, carrying laundry bags stuffed with some 30,000 feet of film. They finally reached a village near the border, where Hungary was separated from Austria by a river. A Soviet patrol was in the village, and Zsigmond and Kovacs decided that the danger of being found by the soldiers was too great. They hid the film in a stack of corn in a field and walked into the village, pretending to be local peasants. The Soviet soldiers searched and questioned everyone, but none of the villagers gave away the fugitives' true identities. The young men from Budapest soon found themselves facing a wall with their hands stretched high above them, waiting for the colonel who was heading the interrogation.

Suddenly, Kovacs remembered that he had hidden still pictures of the uprising in his boot. To this day, Zsigmond and Kovacs don't know if the soldier overlooked the photos or simply decided to let them go. Later than night, they retrieved the film from the field, and a Hungarian border guard rowed them across the

We congratulate the American Society of Cinematographers on their 80th anniversary of service to the film industry and in naming Vilmos Zsigmond as recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award. His dedication and commitment to the art of film-making is commendable, and he is a source of inspiration to everyone in the industry.



A Transcendent Career Foretold

river to Austria.

A lab in Vienna processed their film, but none of the Western TV networks were interested in buying it; as far as they were concerned, the revolution was old news. The duo eventually sold the film for enough money to pay the lab bill. Later, they heard that their footage had been sold to CBS Television for \$100,000. It aired for the first time five years later in a famous documentary narrated by Walter Cronkite, and has since been shown many times.

Zsigmond migrated to the United States in January of 1957 as a political refugee. He spent a month in a refugee camp in New York and then moved to Chicago, where he was sponsored by the Lutheran Church. "The weather was brutally cold, and one of the other refugees, Joseph Zsuffa, a documentarian and novelist, was working on a script for a short film," he recalls. "Joseph spoke and wrote English. I moved to Los Angeles with him in 1958, certain that I would shoot his film. I always believed I would become a cinematographer in Hollywood."

After arriving in L.A., Zsigmond got a job in a laboratory, where he processed color film and made black-and-white prints for professional still photographers. He says he learned to speak English "one word at a time." Zsigmond worked weekends and nights for producers who were making educational and training films.

It took him about five years to find work in the motion picture industry. His first projects were "B" films for drive-ins. They were usually filmed in 16mm Techniscope and blown up to 35mm CinemaScope. "I owned a 16mm Arriflex camera and lenses, which I modified for Techniscope," Zsigmond recalls. "I also owned lights. Everything I had fit into a station wagon. For \$100 a day, you got my equipment and my services as a cinematographer."

By the early 1960s, Zsigmond had found a niche in the TV commercial industry with Gus Jekel, a cutting-edge director who owned a company called Film Fair. His timing could not have been better, because TV commercials were transitioning from hard to soft-sell, and talented cinematographers were generally given time and gear to craft "looks." These directors of photography included such ASC greats as Haskell Wexler, Conrad Hall, and William Fraker, who helped popularize a more interpretative form of filmmaking by using soft light, long lenses and combinations of filters. Zsigmond discovered that small nuances could make a big difference in the emotional impact of a TV commercial. "I think it was really the return of an old look," Zsigmond says. "Chaplin's cinematographer used soft light until the studios went to a more stylized hard light. The commercial directors wanted a more natural, softer look. Kodak helped, because around that time they were coming out with more sensitive films.

"Haskell [Wexler] was the first 'Hollywood' cameraman who noticed my work," Zsigmond says. "I shot a movie called *Futz!* [in 1969], and it got terrible reviews. The audiences hated it, but Haskell contacted me and told me the photography was good. He was very encouraging, which was important to me."

A few years later, Zsigmond got another type of support from Harry Wolf, who served several terms as ASC president. "Harry took an interest in me and gave me honest advice," Zsigmond says. "After one film I did, he told me that my work was too slick, and I really appreciated that. Everyone needs somebody who is willing to tell them the truth; otherwise, you never get better. Cinematographers are interesting people because there generally are no secrets or jealousies. I think it is the same with musicians and painters.

Zsigmond shot his first mainstream Hollywood feature, *The Hired Hand*, for Peter Fonda in 1971. That same year, Robert Altman was interested in having Zsigmond shoot *McCabe & Mrs. Miller*. Altman asked to see some of the cinematographer's work, so Zsigmond showed him *Prelude*, a short film he'd shot for actor/director John Astin.

Fortunately, Altman liked what he saw, because Zsigmond had nothing else to show him. The Hired Hand wasn't cut yet, and he was still shooting Red Sky at Morning — at that stage of his career, he considered those films to be the best he'd shot. "[Altman] created an incredible mood," Zsigmond recalls, "and a big part of it was that he surrounded himself with great actors. None of them were big-name stars at that time. We had extras living in houses and tepees that we'd built as sets. They did their own cooking and bathed in the bathhouse we built for the movie. There was a still which was a prop in the movie, and they used it to make real moonshine."

After McCabe & Mrs. Miller, Zsigmond graduated to shooting medium-budget movies, including Brian DePalma's Obsession. "We shot that picture for \$800,000," he recalls. "I did it for a percentage of the profits, and that's the only movie where I ever made money when my salary was based on profits. It was really fun making those movies in the 1970s, because it was very a experimental time and the directors had tremendous freedom. It was their movie."

Zsigmond made his biggest breakthrough on Steven Spielberg's Close Encounters of the Third Kind (AC Jan. '78). He recalls that when he heard his name announced as the winner's at the Academy Awards ceremony, he felt as if electricity was shooting through his body. "It was like a dream," Zsigmond says. "I still remember walking up those steps, knowing that 80 million people were

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watching on television. It was the first time I felt that I belonged."

Zsigmond received his Oscar almost 20 years to the day after he arrived in the United States. He didn't forget his past as he stood at the podium, thanking György Illes and the other teachers at the Hungarian school who gave him his start.

During the past decade, Zsigmond has photographed a number of films with blue-chip directors, including Maverick and Assassins with Richard Donner (AC Nov. '94 and Nov '95, respectively), and Intersection with old friend Mark Rydell. He has also shot several modestly-budgeted features, such as Sean Penn's The Crossing Guard and Willard Carroll's Playing by Heart (AC Dec. '98). Some of Zsigmond's best work has passed relatively unnoticed, however. In March of 1989, he filmed a series of interviews with Vietnam War veterans, which served as the heart of a memorable episode of the ABC television series China Beach. His footage provided quintessential proof that the soul lives behind the eves.

Asked how he selects his projects, Zsigmond replies, "My rule is that if a movie doesn't say something of value for the audience, I don't think it's worth making. You only have time to make so many pictures in your life. Maybe 75 percent of the time, you can tell if a film will be worthwhile when you read the script, but I've been fooled on occasion. There were times when I thought something was going to be a good movie, but it didn't turn out that way. There are so many things that have to come together — the actors, the director, the script."

But in addition to his many successes, Zsigmond has suffered a few heartbreaks in his career as well, particularly on *Heaven's Gate (AC Nov. '80)*, directed by Michael Cimino, and *The Bonfire of the Vanities (AC Nov. '90)*, directed by Brian De Palma. Both films were

major disappointments at the box office, but serious fans of cinematography would be well-advised to screen these titles for Zsigmond's fine camerawork.

In 1996, Zsigmond earned an ASC Award nomination for *The Ghost and the Darkness* (AC Nov. '96), a film which included multiple digital-composite scenes coupling separate bluescreen elements of a lion with actors in appropriate backgrounds. He considers the evolution of digital technology to be an important extension of the cinematic craft, enabling directors and writers to tell stories that weren't possible or practical within the limitations of optical compositing.

Zsigmond says that mastering digital post is a skill that every cinematographer must develop, but he cautions that advances in imaging technology shouldn't be confused with the art of filmmaking. Thinking back to earlier times, Zsigmond points out that he shot McCabe & Mrs. Miller, Scarecrow and Cinderella Liberty with a vintage Mitchell BNC camera. "It took two people to carry it, and it had parallax problems," he says, "but we still managed to record some pretty good images. I think the most important thing about cinematography is lighting. That's how you create the mood that matches the story. The ability to light artistically is a gift from the gods. If you have the ability, you shouldn't waste it. You should be looking for ways to improve and grow."

Maybe that gypsy fortune-teller who predicted that Zsigmond would sail across an ocean and become a great artist was indeed prescient, or maybe it was just destiny. The reality is that Zsigmond and his lifelong friend Kovacs took their fate into their own hands, and both succeeded because they had the talent and the will to make it happen.

"When I was student in Hungary, we saw a Western movie with a scene in a Howard Johnson's restaurant located by a freeway," Zsigmond recalls. "A teacher said that such places didn't exist, that the filmmakers must have built a set for the movie. Years later, I was driving on a thruway between New York City and Buffalo, and every 20 miles, there was another Howard Johnson's restaurant. That's when I realized how big the lies were."

During the first decade after Zsigmond left Hungary, the only way he could stay in touch with his former teachers and friends was by writing them letters. In 1969, György Illes came to Los Angeles after a film he had photographed, The Boys of Paul Street, was nominated for a Best Foreign Film Oscar. Zsigmond met him at the airport, and the first words out of Illes's mouth were, "Why aren't you coming home to visit?" Zsigmond subsequently arranged regular visits to Budapest and the film school. "It was still a pretty closed country until about 1991," he says. "We couldn't send the students videocassettes of our movies. The government thought they were propaganda because they showed how people live in the West."

Zsigmond has since organized an annual two-week seminar at the film school in Budapest. The faculty includes top cinematographers from many countries, and students now come from every part of Europe. "I encourage film students who are interested in cinematography to study sculpture, paintings, music, writing and other arts," Zsigmond says. "Filmmaking consists of all the arts combined. Students are always asking me for advice, and I tell them that they have to be enthusiastic, because it's hard work. The only way to enjoy it is to be totally immersed. If you don't get involved on that level, it could be a very miserable job. I only have one regret about my career: I'm sorry that we are not making silent movies any more. That is the purest art form I can imagine."

Vilmos Zsigmond

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Is an Inspiration



John Toll, ASC details his experiences on The Thin Red Line, an existential combat film that marks the longawaited return of director Terrence Malick.

Interview by Stephen Pizzello Photography by Merie W. Wallace

he Battle of Guadalcanal was one of World War II's pivotal conflicts. Early in 1942, Japanese forces in the South Pacific were advancing toward the Solomon Islands, which had been selected as the strategic site of an airfield that would extend the range of the Axis power's air force. When U.S. intelligence relayed this information back to Washington, America's military brain trust decided that the airfield, which would threaten Australian sea lanes, had to be controlled — at any cost. Mobilizing much more quickly than the Japanese had anticipated, the U.S. sent in the First Marine Division, which quickly took over the lightly defended airfield at Guadalcanal's Lunga Point. The Japanese soon mounted a counteroffensive





that led to six months of brutal combat, during which the Marines managed to repel wave after wave of seasoned troops. After a gradual buildup of forces by both sides, the Americans finally hammered out a decisive victory.

The Thin Red Line is the story of a rifle company within the Army's 25th Division, which arrived on Guadalcanal in November of 1942 to reinforce the Marines. At that point in the battle, the thousands of Japanese troops who were still on the island had adopted defensive tactics, retreating into the territory's grassy hills. There, they would face a torturous attrition exacted by malaria, starvation and the Americans, who were ordered to flush them out.

This historical event served as the backdrop of James Jones's 1962 novel, a semi-autobiographical work which offers some searing insights into the human condition. Director Terrence Malick (*Badlands*, *Days of Heaven* — see coverage of the latter film in AC June '79), who hadn't helmed a motion picture since 1978, made the book the basis of his screenplay, which generated a loud buzz in Hollywood. Malick's long-awaited return to active duty lured in some of the industry's biggest stars, including John Cusack, George Clooney, Woody Harrelson, Nick Nolte, Sean Penn and John Travolta, as well as such capable but lesser-known actors as Adrien Brody, Jim Caviezel, Ben Chaplin, Elias Koteas, Jared Leto and John C. Reilly.

In selecting a director of photography for his haunting, elegiacal war drama, Malick chose two-time Academy Award-winning director of photography John Toll, ASC (*Legends of the Fall, Braveheart*, see *AC* March '95 and June '96, respectively), whose work on *The Thin Red Line* recently earned him both the New York Film Critics' and National Society of Film Critics' awards for Best Cinematography. Toll recently spoke with *AC* about

working with the reclusive director and supervising the lengthy and often arduous location shoot.

American Cinematographer: How did you land the assignment to photograph *The Thin Red Line*?

John Toll, ASC: I knew one of the producers, Grant Hill. He's from Australia, and he worked on the first picture I shot, Wind, which was filmed there. After that project, he came over to the States, where he's been [a unit production manager] on films like Titanic and The Ghost and the Darkness. He'd been working with Terrence Malick on The Thin Red Line for about six months, and he called me when they began looking at directors of photography. Terry had already talked to several cinematographers when I finally got on the phone with him, but we just happened to hit it off.

Was that call your first encounter with Malick?

Toll: Yes, I didn't know

Opposite: In the tall grass of Guadalcanal, Private Bell (Ben Chaplin) mulls over his memories and his mortality. Malick and Toll strove to convey the inner conflicts of the tale's characters visually, rather than relying upon heavy doses of dialogue. Above: Toll (center, in white shirt) and his crew maneuver the Akela crane arm and Libra 3 remote head into position. The cinematographer used the crane to create smooth, compelling "dolly" shots over the Australian location's uneven terrain.



anything about his personality. I'd seen Badlands and Days of Heaven, of course, and they're both great pictures. Whenever you see films like those, you always think, 'Well, it would be great to work with a director like that, because he's obviously interested in making films, as opposed to just commercial product. Back when Terry made those pictures, there wasn't such a clear line between commercial pictures and 'thinking' pictures; nowadays, there's a real distinction between those types of films. I understand that the film industry is a business, but we don't all want to go through our careers just making commercial projects. The idea of making the type of picture that Terry seemed to be going for with The Thin Red Line was obviously desirable. I'm sure that the other cinematographers he spoke to were just as enthusiastic about working with him as I was, but I just happened to get lucky.

When did you finally meet Malick in person? What were your first impressions of him?

Toll: I was actually working in Tennessee, and I had to come back to L.A. one weekend. Terry was living in Austin, Texas, so I stopped off there and we spent a day talking about the project. I didn't know what to expect, but I found him to be very low-key, personable and unpretentious. He's a straightforward person, and he was extremely collaborative right from the start. It was always, 'Well, what do you think? Here's what I'm thinking.' He never said anything like, 'Okay, we're going to do this and this and this.' His approach is a bit more nonlinear. He doesn't have a precisely defined vision of things from the very beginning, but he's intuitive and knows where he wants to go with the material. The specifics are things that he finds along the way. He feels the direction, can see it out there, and knows that as he moves toward it things will become more clearly defined. He attempts to plot every stage of the trip before you begin, and then sort of fine-tunes his approach on the journey. It's a process of discovery, and he feels that it's a bit pointless to define the parameters any further until you're closer to your objective.

Did your director's 20-year absence from the industry have any effect on the production?

Toll: Not really. One of the great things about this project was that several key members of the filmmaking team [production designer Jack Fisk, assistant director Skip Cosper, casting director Dianne Crittenden and editor Billy Weber] had worked with Terry on his previous



films. So even though it had been two decades since Terry had made a picture, he came back into this core unit. They just sort of picked up where they'd left off, and we didn't really feel that 20-year gap. Of course, there was 20 years of technology that he wasn't particularly familiar with [laughs], but he's a great filmmaker and he picked up those types of things very quickly and intuitively.

Were you immediately drawn to the script?

Toll: The idea of this particular project was really interesting to me, and not just because it was a war movie. I remembered reading the James Jones novel when it first came out, and finding it to be just fantastic. I wasn't in the film industry at the time, but I recall thinking that it would make a great motion picture. A film adaptation was actually made in 1964, but it was a pretty lowbudget version, and I was a bit disappointed with it.

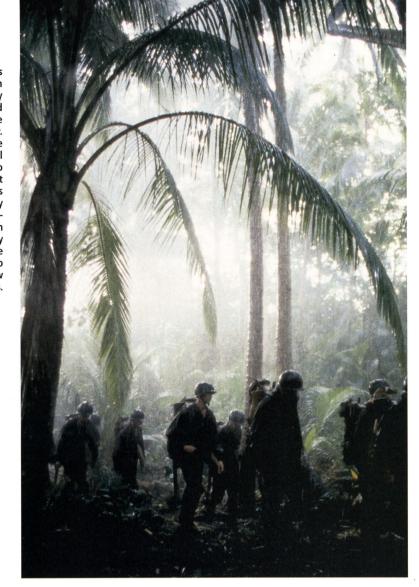
The book is an incredibly realistic depiction of the experience of combat. Jones was a member of the Army's 25th Division; he was at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii during the attack on Pearl Harbor, and he also participated in the Battle of Guadalcanal, so From Here to Eternity and The Thin Red Line are both based on his firsthand experiences. The most interesting thing about *The* Thin Red Line is the way it gets into all of these soldiers' different personalities. While we were shooting the picture, Terry and I kept talking about how interior the narrative was: there's an enormous amount of material in the book about what the characters are experiencing internally — as opposed to what comes out in their conversations, which usually represents an entirely different aspect of their personalities. Terry wanted the viewers to know what was happening within the minds of the characters without necessarily presenting those thoughts through dialogue.

The characters in this story are very well-drawn and diverse. Some are heroes, some aren't, and some are just there to do their job and get out as quickly as possible. It's really a story about the tragedy of war. I got very caught up in the book when I read it, particularly the realistic aspects of being involved in that kind of experience. It was a very truthful story that presented all of the good stuff and all of the bad stuff. You just knew that Jones had been there.

From what you've said about Malick's personality, I'm assuming

While shooting in the Australian hills, the production crew constructed sturdy fixed platforms to support the Akela crane's considerable weight. Here. the filmmakers put the technology to the test as dozens of extras charge into action.

Weary troops trudge through the steamy jungle and toward the waiting enemy. For these sequences, Toll sought to exploit the hot highlights caused by sunlight filtering through the leafy canopy, while exposing into the shadow areas.



he isn't big on storyboards.

Toll: Actually, we did story-board a few sections of the film. At the beginning of the picture, the troops are on a transport ship on the way to Guadalcanal, and there's a big landing sequence. We storyboarded that because we didn't have the resources to have the numbers of real ships and transports that we needed; we had to do some CGI, so we used the sketches to simplify our lives. Whenever you have a sequence on the water, you can immediately get into trouble if you're not prepared.

What other kinds of prep work did you do?

Toll: There were a lot of conversations, and we also scouted in Guadalcanal, which was an unbelievable experience. The place has changed, but not a whole lot. It's a

beautiful island, but it's extremely tropical and not very developed, because the region has one of the highest malaria rates in the world. During the war, enormous numbers of people came down with malaria; it was worse for the Japanese, because they weren't well-supplied. That was one of the biggest drawbacks in their battle plan, and many of those crack troops wound up just starving to death. It was a basically a win or die situation, because the Japanese simply would not surrender.

One of the things that struck us immediately during the Guadal-canal scout was how loaded with color this tropical environment was; after all, we're used to seeing black-and-white newsreels of World War II combat. At one point, we did talk about shooting the picture in black-

and-white, but that notion didn't really take hold. The idea of all of this violence taking place in such a rich and colorful environment was very striking, and we felt that representing the story any other way just wouldn't be accurate. We got a lot of ideas about tones and colors as we explored the area.

Eventually, you opted to shoot most of the film in Australia. What led to that decision?

Toll: We didn't want to work in Guadalcanal for all of the same reasons that you wouldn't want to go there during a war. There's still a 50 percent rate of malaria, and it just wasn't feasible logistically if we wanted to have the kind of technical support we knew we'd need. It's still a bit difficult to get on and off the island, and we had some scenes that involved 200 or 300 extras. We would have had to bring everybody to Guadalcanal, and financially it just didn't make sense.

The real battlefields depicted in the book basically consist of grassy hills, and we began looking all over the world for that type of terrain. When we went to Australia, which is just 1,000 miles from the Solomon Islands, we found the same types of terrain — beaches, beautiful coral reefs, and grassy hills on the north coast near Queensland. Australia also has some great crews and resources, and a good lab, Atlab, right there in Sydney. It made an enormous amount of sense to shoot there. I still knew a lot of people from my experience on Wind, such as gaffer Mick Morris and key grip David Nichols, and many of them were hired for this picture.

In the end, we wound up shooting for 80 days in Australia and another 20 in Guadalcanal.

Did you have any specific visual inspirations for the look of the film?

Toll: During the shoot, Jack Fisk brought us this book called Images of War: The Artist's Vision of

World War II [1992, edited by Ken McCormick and Hamilton Darby Perry], which presents 200 paintings by many different artists. These were artists who spent time in the front lines and came back with this fantastic artwork depicting the scenes they had witnessed, including many combat situations. All of the artists had different and unique styles. We didn't necessarily try to reproduce these pieces of art, but they did give us good ideas about color schemes and so on. The illustrations basically served as a guide to the kind of atmosphere we were after.

We'd looked at many photographs from the war, but they seemed too detailed somehow, and I wanted the imagery of our film to be a bit less clearly defined. The paintings were great because they were much more impressionistic and abstract in a way that I found more interesting than the photographs. For example, there was one drawing of Japanese prisoners sitting on the ground, and the light they were drawn in — bright contrasty sunlight which left their faces in shadow — looked very similar to the light conditions we were shooting in. There was detail in the prisoners' faces, but the highlights of the background were bright and burned-out. I thought it looked fantastic.

In some scenes [that I'd shot to that point], I had lit the actors' faces or had used fill in situations with heavy contrast, but I'd begun doing it less and less because I started to like the way the film looked when I didn't use fill — overexposing quite a bit, getting detail in the shadows and letting the highlights burn out. It looked much less controlled in an interesting way. After seeing the drawing, which was a much more exaggerated version of what we'd been doing photographically, I went with less and less added light.

How did those ideas factor into your overall stylistic approach? Toll: Terry has a basic honesty,

which is part of the reason that we get along. We were trying to re-create this historical event in a way that was truthful. The film is not a documentary, but we wanted it to have the integrity of a great documentary. We didn't necessarily want to shoot it like a documentary, but we tried to lend the story a natural kind of realism. We sought out to capture the book's honest depiction of the various types of reactions to the combat experience — the full range of human emotions. War itself, and the infantryman's experience of it, is probably as fundamental and basic as you can get in terms of the human condition and how people react to its extremes. It pushes people to their limits, and what emerges can be very surprising in both good and bad ways. Somehow, we had to weave

that sense of honesty into the visual presentation.

Terry and I agreed that this film really needed to feel as realistic as possible. Naturally, there is a certain amount of visual stylization in the film, but we tried to lend the images an integrity so that viewers could believe that they were watching a real event — without feeling as if they were being overly manipulated by a great filmmaker. I sometimes see great visual films that are obviously so well-stylized and well-controlled that I feel slightly overmanipulated; it might be fantastic, beautiful work, but in my mind I don't feel as if I'm watching reality.

Why did you choose to shoot in true anamorphic rather than Super 35?

> Toll: We chose straight



To diffuse the natural light in the jungle and eliminate the danger of falling coconuts, the crew hired a professional coconut trimmer" to prune the trees and hang frames of light gridcloth. The resulting illumination was further controlled with the use of negative fill.

The War Within

Right: The Zenlike Private Witt (Jim Caviezel) comforts a fallen comrade as the Japanese approach. Below: Toll captures the action as a group of actors pick their way through pyro effects.



anamorphic over Super 35 because I don't really like the idea of having an optical step at the end of the answerprint process. I want to know that what we're seeing during dailies is definitely what we're going to get in our original neg prints. Terry and I had always planned that this would be a widescreen picture because we wanted to see the characters within their environments; after all, that's the major focus of the story.

What kind of camera package did you assemble for the shoot?

Toll: Everything came from Panavision in Los Angeles. We took a couple of lightweight Platinum camera bodies, one for the Steadicam and one for the handheld stuff. I still really like the Gold camera, so I used one of those as my primary sound and dolly camera. [Cinematographer] Gary Capo headed up our second unit, and he had a couple of Panastars and an Arri. In terms of the lenses, we used Primos as well as Cseries lenses on the Steadicam. We also had 3:1 and 11:1 zooms, but we didn't use them very much. It was pretty much a wide-angle movie, so we shot mainly with wider lenses, like the 40mm and 50mm. Our close-ups were mainly done with the 75mm or 100mm. We were constantly fighting to get as much of the geography into the frame as we could. Every time we put on a tighter lens it just felt as if we were missing something.

There's quite a bit of camera movement in the picture. Were you trying to create a subjective point of view?

Toll: Right from the beginning, we talked a lot about making the viewers feel as if they were watching this story from close up, almost as if they were participants. A lot of what the characters go through emotionally is unspoken, so it was necessary to convey those moments in a visual way. We wanted the camera to tell the story and yet somehow be part of the story — almost as if the audience was making the same journey as the characters.

Terry and I talked extensively about creating a sense of movement throughout the whole picture. He loves to speak in metaphors, and he kept saying, 'It's like moving down a river, and the picture should have that same kind of flow.'

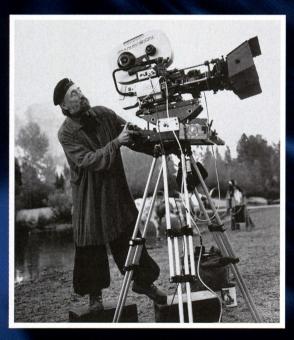
How did you achieve that sensation technically?

Toll: During prep, we had talked about various ways to create that kind of style, but we never settled on a single approach. On the first couple of days of the schedule, we shot some scenes with a moving camera on a dolly, and some with stationary cameras incorporating conventional coverage and angles. It was all technically correct, and there was nothing wrong with the scenes, but when we viewed the footage, it sometimes felt very 'staged' and overly structured for the camera.

We knew we wanted something more, so we decided to loosen up our approach a bit. As a result, there's a lot of Steadicam and handheld work in the picture. We had a great Australian Steadicam operator named Brad Shields. We allowed the camera to explore a bit, and Terry encouraged the actors to try something different if they felt like it. At times, the camera would drift from one actor to another; we might not get conventional masters or coverage, but it didn't seem that important. Every scene became a unique situation, and we just shot what seemed to be most appropriate for a particular sequence. We allowed the camera to follow the emotional thread of a scene without worrying about much



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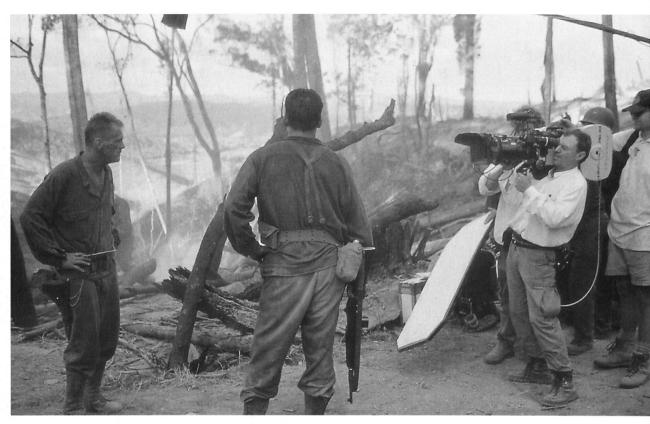
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The War Within

Toll zeroes in as Captain Gaff (John Cusack, back to camera) confronts his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Tall (Nick Nolte). To effectively capture the characters' facial expressions in this key scene, Toll kept the actors in broken sunlight softened with smoke. White fill and black negative were used to further shape the light.



else. What seemed to emerge from that was a feeling of unpredictability which completely supported the idea that Guadalcanal was a strange and dangerous place that these characters suddenly found themselves in.

Terry got into that style of shooting immediately; he has a rather spontaneous and unpredictable personality, so the idea made a lot of sense to him. Using Steadicam and handheld camera certainly isn't a new idea, but the challenge was in shooting scenes that way without drawing unnecessary attention to the techniques themselves. I wanted to use the fluid, mobile camera movement as part of the overall style of the film, but in a way that supported the story.

Those techniques are very effective during a key sequence in which the Americans finally overtake the Japanese in a bivouac area.

Toll: That scene is basically the Japanese soldiers' last stand. Some of them are dying of starvation, some commit suicide, some surrender and

others decide to fight to the last man. I think we really captured the chaos and tragedy of that type of battle. No one really wants to be there, but they have to follow orders, and whether given individuals survive or get killed is really just a matter of chance.

The whole sequence was done with either a handheld camera and/or the Steadicam — primarily the Steadicam — and Brad Shields did a great job on it. The Americans are running into the area and the Japanese are all around them, so you don't know if the guy next to you is friend or foe. Once we set up for that scene, we had the actors go in and improvise action. We then kept repeating the sequence over and over, following different characters through this nightmarish situation. It was semi-controlled chaos, and it wasn't over-rehearsed to the point where everyone always knew what they were going to do. There were many extras in the scene, a lot of people firing at each other, and various guys taking some predetermined

hits. We just let the camerawork be as free-form as possible.

You also made extensive and interesting use of the Akela crane in the film.

Toll: The Akela was a great asset. One of our biggest challenges was a daytime battle sequence in these grassy hills. The Japanese were in the hills, and the Americans had to go up there, find them, and kill them. To deal with those scenes, we brought in the Akela, which came with two American technicians. The terrain was very uneven; the grass was about waist-high, and underneath it there were a lot of rocks and holes. We spent weeks climbing up and falling down these hills. At times we could use the Steadicam really well out there, but at other times it became impossible because we wanted to see the soldiers actually going up the hills. One of the tougher challenges we faced was preserving the look of this waist-high grass. You couldn't walk through the grass more than a couple of times without leav-

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The War Within

ing these huge paths. It was like working in snow, where you've got to cover your tracks. There's only so much you can do before you destroy the look of the location.

I was contemplating this problem long before we got to the location, because I knew what we were up against with the grass and the steep hills. I began thinking about using the Akela crane, which has an extremely long, 72' arm that would allow us to get the camera into places where we couldn't walk or lay dolly track. The only problem was that I wanted to install the crane on the sides of hills, which involved building some fairly substantial platforms, because the Akela weighs about 6,000 pounds. It worked out fabulously, though. The Akela's arm does have a slight arc, but it's a much more minimal arc than any conventional crane arm. Because of that, we could make shots that had the appearance of a dolly shot. That was the whole reason for bringing in the Akela, and we constantly had it at very low angles; I don't think we used it more than once or twice for a high-angled shot. Our expert technicians, Michael Gough and Mark Willard, kept wanting to show off how high it would go, but I kept hammering them with my mantra: 'It's a dolly, not a crane.' We basically turned our crane technicians into dolly grips, but they did a fantastic job.

There are some great Akela crane shots in the film where we follow the soldiers over really long distances. We did have to train the actors to stay with the crane arm, because it doesn't move in a perfectly straight line. If we were ahead of them, they could just follow the lens, but if we were shooting from behind, we would trace out the arc so the actors could follow it. But using the Akela really allowed us to get down

in the grass and get shots that just wouldn't have been possible with a dolly or even a Steadicam because of the uneven terrain.

What kind of remote head were you using on the Akela?

Toll: We attached a Libra 3 head, which worked out great for us. I'd used an earlier version of it, called the Megamount, on *Braveheart*. Nick Phillips, who's based in London, designed both versions. I knew that the Libra 3 was a good remote head, and it has all of these stabilization characteristics that other remote heads don't have, such as an electronic gyrostabilizer rather than a mechanical one. We were moving the crane arm really fast and coming to abrupt stops, and the Libra really helped to take any wobble out of the

Part of the initial motivation for bringing in the Libra 3 was that I wanted to have a really stable camera



The Akela crane arm follows the actors through a shroud of fog and into a climactic confrontation.

Elizabeth



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The War Within

Corporal Fife (Adrien Brody) comes face to face with the horrors of combat during a bloody showdown with **Japanese** troops in a bivouac area. Much of this sequence was shot with handheld cameras or Steadicam to heighten the sense of chaos.



for the shipboard scenes in the landing sequence. We put the Libracam and head on a crab dolly with a hydraulic arm that we could raise and lower. When we set that rig up on the deck of the smaller landing craft, it stabilized the horizon gyroscopically; we got these fantastic shots where the troops and the craft itself are in the foreground, and you really get a sense of the movement because the horizon is absolutely stable. It almost seems as if the camera's not really on the landing craft, because the boat is moving up and down all around it. You really get a sense of the sea motion.

Later on in the picture, we put the Libra head in the back of a truck that was transporting some of the characters through the airfield. The road was so bouncy that you couldn't even look through the camera, but the Libra 3 completely smoothed it all out.

There's a particularly interest-

ing flashback shot of one of the American soldiers' wives on a swing. How did you get such an unusual perspective?

Toll: We didn't even use a head for that shot. The camera was actually upside-down; I think it was Terry's idea. Once we put the actress on the swing, I wanted to get the camera at her eye level, so we just put the camera on top of a ladder behind her. When she swung back, she was heading right toward the camera, which was just off to the side of her; it was about two feet from the actress's face when she got to the top of her arc. We initially tried the shot with the camera right-side up, but when we flipped the camera over and did it again it looked great.

In addition to the Australian hills, you also had to deal with a jungle. How did that affect your lighting strategy?

Toll: In those situations, scouting is everything. We would basically

clear out a path to get the gear in, and then take the actors in another 100' and let them struggle. [Laughs.]

We did haul some lights into the jungle, but when we turned them on, they completely changed the character and nuances of the natural light. It was beautiful in there, but we were dealing with extremely low light levels. There were subtleties in the colors and gradations of the natural light that completely disappeared when we mixed in any artificial fill. There was plenty of contrast, though, because the sunlight that did filter in created great hot highlights. I decided to just expose into the shadows as much as possible and go for the natural falloff of the shadows to compensate for lack of detail. It worked out okay.

This became a general approach to lighting most of the exteriors. I started out using some amounts of fill, but I became less and less interested in controlling contrast;

I would expose for the shadow detail that I wanted and then usually let highlights go. At times, we would use indirect light bounced from muslin or beadboard to lift faces, and maybe use black for negative, but when we were working in heavy contrast, I was quite a bit overexposed from what a more normal exposure would be in those situations. When it was sunny, it was extremely contrasty, but rather than trying to balance everything by adding fill, I just ignored the highlights.

I thought the film actually started looking much better when we lost the details in the highlights; it seemed more appropriate for the story. The more contrasty things got, the better, because it felt as if things were out of control — just as they were in the story.

Can you give me an example of how the lighting conditions affected your work with the actors?

Toll: There's a sequence that I like between Nick Nolte, who plays this mad colonel, and John Cusack, who's his adjutant. In the scene, which occurs about halfway through the battle, Nolte tells Cusack not to worry about the men and to focus on the charge up the hill. We were on top of a hill in an area with all of these burned-out tree trunks. It was extremely contrasty, but we really wanted to get into the faces and show the actors' expressions. We chose to shoot in a direction that would allow us to take advantage of the light. We put them in areas where they were in direct sunlight that was broken up by the trees, and we also added smoke to soften the sunlight. We wanted to show the environment, but we also chose angles that were good for close-ups and dialogue. We used some white fill and black negative to give the characters some shape and contrast, but choosing the right angles was the most important consideration.

Days of Heaven is probably the most famous 'magic hour' film

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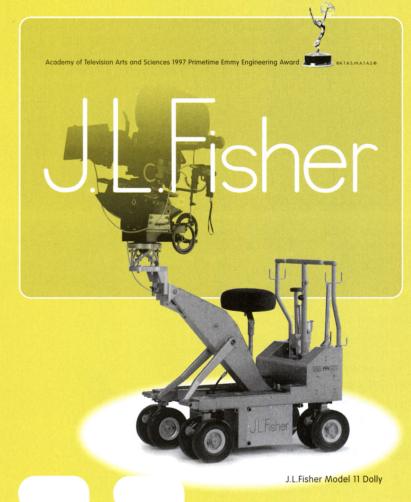




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The War Within

ever made. Were you able to do that kind of work on The Thin Red Line?

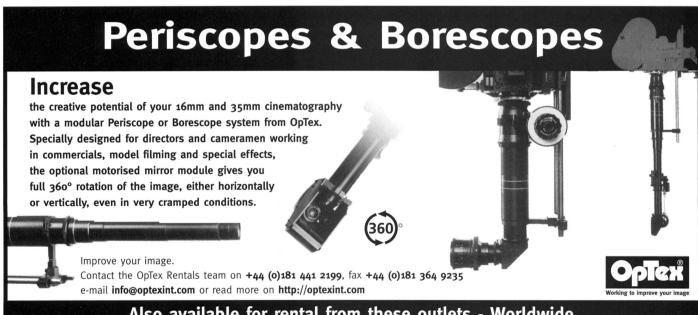
Toll: Because this is a Terrence Malick film, a lot people will just assume that we sat around waiting for magic hour, but we simply didn't have the luxury of doing that on this picture. We had a 180-page script, and after we shot all of that we went to Guadalcanal for 20 more days of unscripted improvisations. We shot relentlessly every day, in every conceivable lighting condition, from seven in the morning until it got dark at about six p.m. Yes, there are magichour shots in the film, but only because we had to shoot until it got dark! [Laughs.]

It's amazing to me how often I hear cinematographers say that they think shooting good-looking day exterior movies is all about sitting around and waiting for the right light to happen, and then just pointing your camera at it and shooting

'pretty pictures.' Doing good work in day exterior situations means that you must be able to make great images all day long, even when the light isn't ideal for pretty pictures. You must make choices that will allow you to take advantage of natural light in existing conditions. Even when the light is 'bad' it is possible to do good work by making wise choices.

The predominant day exterior lighting conditions on this film were either sunny high-contrast or soft contrast resulting from overcast conditions. Because we were shooting all day long and didn't have the luxury of waiting for ideal light, we had to decide how to make existing light work for the scenes we were schedule to do on a given day. It was impossible to entirely control all of the light in our shots because we were using wider-angle anamorphic lenses and constantly moving the

camera. None of the traditional methods of light control, such as putting up silks, were possible, because of the terrain and the nature of the shots. Sometimes, if we were doing extended dialogue and didn't like the way the contrast was affecting the actors' faces, we would try to create an artificial 'overcast' look by staging scenes under trees or in the shadow of a hill. At other times, we would stay in the open and go with the existing high contrast, exposing the faces and letting the contrast go. There were also days when we had both overcast and high-contrast sun happening simultaneously because of low clouds moving quickly and causing severe light changes. We had some days when the light changes happened so quickly that we just shot through them. It could be blistering hot one moment, and completely dark the next — sometimes in the same shot. But that represented the



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reality of the situation, and we just went with it. We didn't fight the conditions; we just tried to make them part of the story. In fact, for one Akela shot of the soldiers climbing up the hills, we waited specifically for a light change to happen. The scene starts out in heavy cloud cover, but the sun comes out and reveals these guys sneaking through the grass. That particular light change worked well for us.

The point I'm trying to make is that good daytime exterior cinematography is not comprised solely of making 'pretty pictures' at magic hour; it's about being knowledgeable about your craft and being able to create interesting images in all of the various daylight conditions.

What kind of look did you go for in scenes that had to be lit?

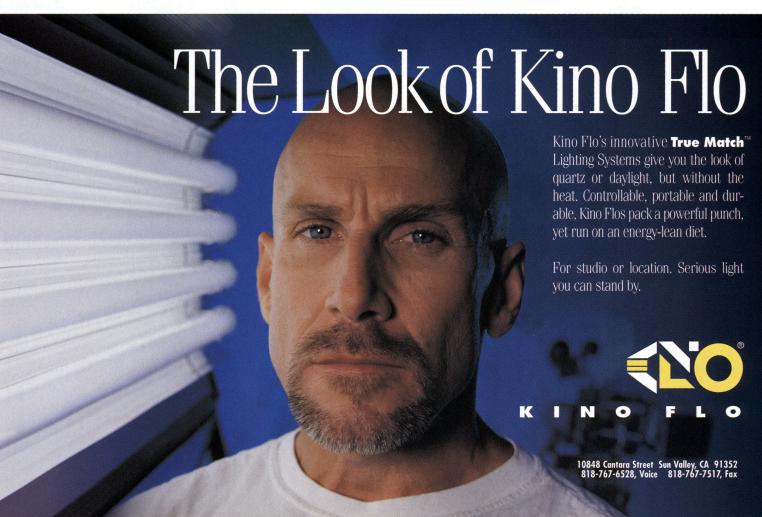
Toll: There are some scenes at the beginning of the film that take place within a troop transport ship. "Doing good work in day exterior situations means that you must be able to make great images all day long, even when the light isn't ideal for pretty pictures. You must make choices that will allow you to take advantage of natural light in existing conditions."

— cinematographerJohn Toll, ASC

We wanted to play those scenes really dark, and we used a lot of Steadicam. The ship interior set was actually built on a covered tennis court in Australia. We used every inch of that

court, because we didn't have anything resembling a stage. We basically lit the ship interior with practical fixtures that were outfitted with really hot incandescent globes. It was mostly hot toplight that created little pools of light. In areas where we didn't have a practical fixture, we just cut a hole in the ceiling and popped a light down through it. Once again, we tried to create as much contrast as possible; the light was about three to four stops overexposed, and the shadow areas were very dark. I used more light in those scenes than I would have if it was a spherical picture; I was shooting at about T4.5 to get as much depth as possible. We were trying to really capture the claustrophobic feeling that exists within that type of ship.

There were also a few tent interiors in the picture with a nice look. There's one scene that I really like with Sean Penn and John Reilly. We



The War Within

Toll and his crew track several characters as they head uphill and into the teeth of a Japanese machine-gun nest. A good deal of the film's action was improvised on the spot.



just got well back and bounced an enormous amount of light [into the tent] from a distance. Throughout the picture, we were attempting to recreate the look of the natural-light situations that we were encountering.

Which film stocks did you use?

Toll: It was primarily a day exterior shoot, so I used Kodak's [100 ASA EXR] 5248 outside. For the lower-light situations and interiors, I used the Vision [500T] 5279. I would basically switch to the faster stock when we started to get a light reading below 2.8; I didn't want to shoot 48 wide open on anamorphic lenses because of the lack of depth. I used the faster stock to maintain my depth of field.

I find that the sharpness of the Vision stock worked well for this picture, because we were after a sense of hard reality. I still feel that the Vision stocks are slightly too contrasty, though. I prefer the older T-grain stocks like 5293, which is a really great stock.

Of course, I should point out that 90 percent of the film was shot on the 48.

Do you have an 'optimum' Tstop that you prefer to work at?

Toll: I don't normally like to work deeper than an 8, and I never work wider than 2.8 in anamorphic. I feel much more comfortable working at around 4. Shooting wider than 2.8 in anamorphic is pointless, I think, because at that stop there's just not enough information in focus.

Did you use any filtration on this picture?

Toll: No, we shot everything clean. Every once in a while we'd throw in a grad filter if we got into some heavy, burned-out backgrounds, but we had so much camera movement that we didn't use them a lot.

Have you applied any special

lab processes?

Toll: I did a lot of testing at Technicolor before we left to go on location, and I was initially planning to do ENR prints because I really wanted to get the richest blacks possible. At the last minute before we answer-printed, though, I tested the new Kodak Vision print stock and it looked great. The blacks were very good, and I felt that the color rendition of the Vision stock was more appropriate for this picture than ENR. The ENR process is a great look, but it does desaturate some colors to a certain extent. I wanted to maintain the richness and variety of the natural color photographed in our tropical environments, and therefore switched to the Vision stock. Kodak was great, and we were able to get enough Vision print stock for the entire release.

While I'm on the topic, I must mention the work of color timer David Orr at Technicolor. He did a great job timing this movie on a very tight schedule. He was able to match the light in some sequences, which I was *slightly* nervous about. I actually was blessed on this picture with two great timers, because my dailies at Atlab in Australia were supervised by Arthur Cambridge, whom I'd first met on *Wind*. Arthur is the premier color timer in Australia, and I couldn't have been in better hands.

The presentation of violence in the film isn't quite as visceral as the battle scenes in *Saving Private Ryan* [see *AC* Aug. '98]. Was that by design?

Toll: The combat was certainly important to the story, which is about men experiencing warfare for the first time. However, the graphic and visceral aspects of that experience weren't nearly as important to Terry as the individual soldiers' reactions to the situation. Therefore, our presentation of that type of action isn't as hyperreal as it is in Private Ryan. I was initially interested in taking that kind of approach, but it wasn't Terry's focus. Gary Capo and the second unit did a lot of the combat footage, and they did a great job, but we weren't aiming for the same degree of intensity that Private Ryan has. This is a different kind of movie.

Were you keeping tabs on *Private Ryan* while you were in production?

Toll: We were shooting at the same time. My wife, Lois Burwell, was the chief makeup artist on *Private Ryan*. She was in Ireland and England while I was in Australia, and we would talk by phone or send emails back and forth. She was very excited about the work they were doing. She was designing amazing prosthetic devices and making elaborate blood rigs. She would tell me something like, 'I can't believe how great the dailies look. It seems so real; it's like you're actually watching the war. I'm really excited.' And I would

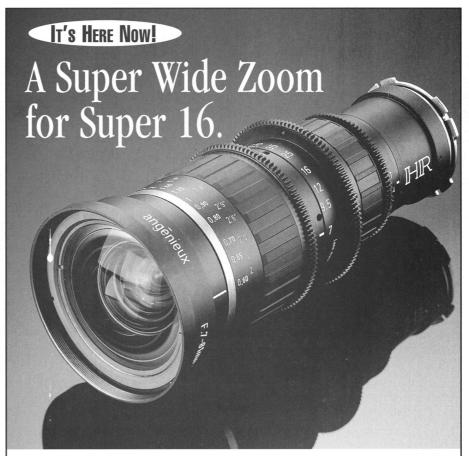
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During their grueling mission on Guadalcanal, the American forces paid a heavy psychic price. Here, a shell-shocked sergeant (John Savage) vents the tension after straying from his unit.



say, 'Oh, that's really wonderful, dear. You must be so happy.' Of course, I was really thinking, 'My God, no, that's what I wanted to do on this film!' I had been trying to get Terry to do more graphic combat right from the beginning, but he didn't see the picture that way. After talking to my wife, I'd tell him, 'Hey, Lois is doing all of this graphic blood stuff on Private Ryan. And he'd reply, 'Oh, really? I don't think I want to do anything like that.' We were obviously interested in seeing how Private Ryan turned out, but it didn't have any influence on what we were doing. Now, after seeing Private Ryan, I must say that I think Steven Spielberg, Janusz Kaminski [ASC], and the crew of that picture created a whole new level of expertise with

that type of action and effects work. They did the best job ever of creating that kind of combat experience on film. *Ryan* is a fantastic film.

Did you use multiple cameras for any of the battle footage?

Toll: We didn't do that as much as I had on *Braveheart*. There was only one day when we had a combined first and second unit and we shot with four cameras. The majority of the time, the first and second units shot with two cameras. I was almost reluctant to do this movie because of *Braveheart*; I thought that the *last* thing I should be doing at this point in my career was another day exterior battlefield movie [laughs], but I was drawn to the material and the idea of working with Terry. I tried not to think about

Braveheart while we were shooting, and this movie didn't have that kind of scale. It didn't involve the same numbers of people, and we didn't put as much emphasis on the fighting itself. The battles weren't as grand in scope.

How extensive were the practical effects in those sequences?

Toll: Again, it wasn't quite as involved as the work in Private Ryan. We had a great special effects team, headed by an Australian named Brian Cox; they did a terrific job, but [the combat] wasn't the most important aspect of the picture. We had several mortar and artillery barrages that were fairly big, as well as nighttime pyro effects for a bombing raid on the airfield. All of our lighting in that sequence came from the explosions themselves; we played the soldiers in silhouette as the 'bombs' went off. We did some tests with the effects guys to determine how hot their explosions were going to be, and then exposed at around T4.

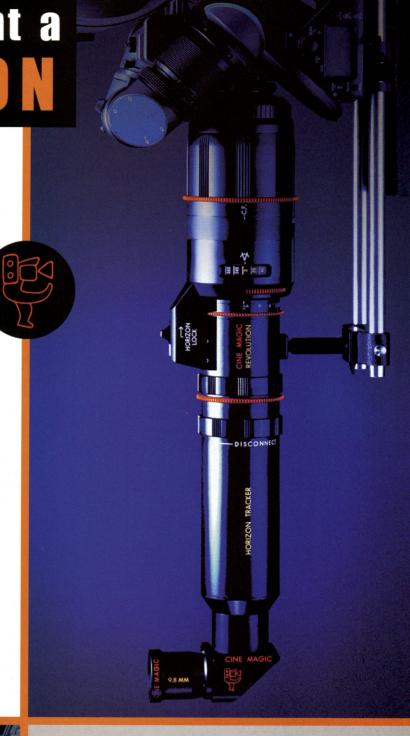
What kind of footage were you after when you went back to Guadalcanal?

Toll: One aspect of Guadalcanal that wasn't in the book, but which interested Terry very much, was the ethnographic aspect of the island. The story of the Melanesian people who lived there during the war is really interesting. They had existed for centuries in this very peaceful and tropical place when they were suddenly invaded by all of this large-scale violence. Even today, it's a fairly isolated environment.

When we went back to the island, we wanted to find some native people to put in the picture. One of the lead characters, Witt [played by Jim Caviezel], spends time in a Melanesian village, and that's where the picture opens. Terry wanted to introduce this idea early on, and he wanted to present these people in their traditional lifestyle, as it had existed back in the 1940s. We did a lot of research, and we discovered that

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this culture no longer existed in the areas of Guadalcanal that were logistically accessible to us. We therefore put together a special third unit to find a village and shoot anthropological footage. The unit was headed up by Reuben Aaronson, who had done a lot of *National Geographic* shoots. He and his team went to this traditional village on the south side of the island, and stayed there for a couple of weeks.

How did the Melanesians react to having a camera crew in their midst?

Toll: Sometimes it worked out. and sometimes it didn't, but that's the nature of ethnographic work. Reuben had an anthropologist with him, Christine Jourdan, who has made a career out of studying the people of the Solomon Islands. She really knew the people, and how to blend in with them. They shot footage of these people existing with no trace of modernity around them, and some of it's in the picture. Reuben had never shot 35mm, and he suddenly found himself working with a Panaflex and anamorphic lenses. He did a great job, though.

When the first unit went in later, we re-created a portion of the village in an area that was accessible to us, and got some of the locals to come in and interact with our actors. They spent a few days getting to know each other, and then we improvised a few sequences. The people were very natural, because all they had to do was be themselves. We used a very reduced unit to make them feel more comfortable.

What else did you shoot on Guadalcanal?

Toll: We were able to get some shots that established the geographic continuity between Savo Island, the beach, the palm trees and the hills. Savo Island was the site of several horrendous naval battles, and the huge coconut groves on Guadalcanal really had the signature look of the South Pacific. In addition, the hills

on the island are within a mile or two of the beach, but those areas didn't exist in Australia. By shooting on Guadalcanal itself, we were able to establish that connection.

How did that experience affect you personally?

Toll: Going to Guadalcanal was the best thing we could have done to get a sense of the real circumstances of the war. In fact, there are still a lot of artifacts from the war lying around. The locals showed us pieces from their collections, which included weapons, uniforms, helmets, and so on. We were constantly finding remnants of the battle at some of our locations. One of the assistant directors even tripped over a spent artillery shell that was buried in the ground.

Being there also helped to give us a better appreciation for what everyone there must have gone through. The jungle on the island is an extremely uncomfortable environment — it's very hot and humid. We visited the sites of many of the battles described in the book, and they were pretty amazing. You just cannot imagine how horrible it must have been. The idea of these men living out there for months at a time in such dangerous and brutal combat situations seems just incredible to me. I think we all came away with a real sense of the sacrifice that was made by everyone who participated in the war. Hopefully, our film works as an illustration of that.

As much as any film I've ever worked on, this picture was about an idea. I believe that what Terry wanted the film to be about, most of all, was that the real enemy in war is the war itself. War, and not necessarily one side or the other, is the great evil. It isn't often that one gets to work on films of this nature, and I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in making it.



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or an entire generation of Americans, the mere mention of Vietnam will forever provoke memories of the pain and loss suffered during a particularly brutal war. Throughout the Sixties and early Seventies, while outrage toward United States military involvement with Vietnam inflamed American discourse, Hollywood was slow to even deal with the subject.

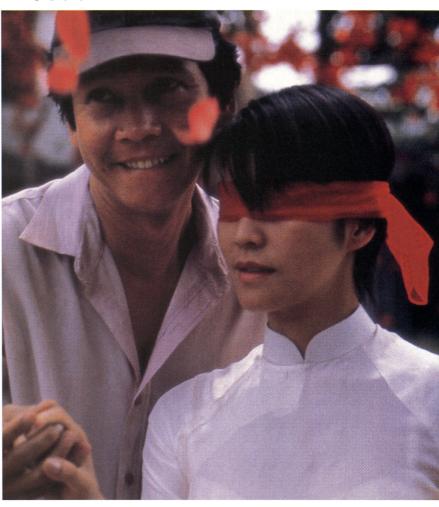
When filmmakers finally did tackle the Vietnam War, most turned their cameras away from the Vietnamese people and their land, history and customs, choosing instead to focus on the U.S. perspective. The Deer Hunter, Apocalypse Now, Platoon and Full Metal Jacket were all powerful and visionary films made by American filmmakers and financed by Hollywood studios, with action recreated and photographed in Thailand, the Philippines and even far from Vietnam on a London backlot. Directors Michael Cimino, Francis Ford Coppola, Oliver Stone and Stanley Kubrick transformed the conflict into catastrophic images and narratives which continue to resonate decades after the carnage.

Now, more than two decades after the war's end, director Tony Bui has created a film that shows Vietnam through the eyes of its people. Photographed by rising cinematographer Lisa Rinzler, *Three Seasons* is the first motion picture

In shooting the film *Three Seasons*, cinematographer Lisa Rinzler joins writer/director Tony Bui on a trip to his changing homeland of Vietnam.

by Vincent LoBrutto

Photography by Peter Stone



fully financed by an American studio to be filmed entirely on location in Vietnam. The film's poetic images and poignant, intertwining stories depict a land and people long hidden from Americans.

Bui, the picture's 25-year-old writer/director, was born in Vietnam just before the fall of Saigon. When he was two years old, his parents left the war-ravaged country and settled in Sunnyvale, California, the heart of Silicon Valley. A teenage zeal for storytelling and the creation of short Super 8mm films and videos led Bui to the film program at Loyola Marymount University. In 1992, he began a series of personal sojourns to Vietnam, and the experience had a lasting impact on his filmmaking aspirations. "Visually, I was so struck and affected by what I saw," Bui recalls. "There were so many changes. It's a country going through a stage



of influence. In 1992, there were Russian ships and kiosks everywhere. By 1997, all of that was gone, replaced by Coca-Cola and Pepsi signs and [ubiquitous] taxis — taxis didn't even exist in Vietnam in 1993. From 1992 to 1997 there was a dramatic change and influence, and it was all Western."

Bui's early visits to his homeland inspired him to write a 30-minute short film, Yellow Lotus, which presented the humanity and spirit of the Vietnamese people liberated from the politics of war. The film was shot on location in Vietnam with a student crew of 10 for only \$9,000. The country's restrictive government and strict censorship made it difficult for filmmakers to shoot in Vietnam, but Bui submitted his project for permission. "I was so naive, I actually did it," Bui recalls. "If I'd known how hard it would be, I never would have tried. I sent a fax to the film studio there, and they agreed to sponsor me. I couldn't believe it. I said I had no money, and that I would have to use their old Russian dollies and equipment, and they said, 'Yes, definitely come.' I think they were interested in the story I was writing because Yellow Lotus had nothing to do with war. I was very conscious about making films that told about Vietnam today." The minister of culture in Hanoi approved the project in less than four days, the fastest go-ahead a foreign filmmaker had ever received. Yellow Lotus premiered at the 1995 Telluride Film Festival, screened at Sundance, won awards at the Hamptons, San Francisco and Chicago film festivals, and was televised on PBS.

The success of *Yellow Lotus* inspired Bui to take on the challenge of creating a feature film that would open the cinematic door to Vietnam for American and international audiences. Bui approached the subject of present-day Saigon poetically, using the seasons as a

metaphor for the rebirth of his ethnic culture. *Three Seasons* tells the human story of a changing Vietnam through lyrical visual allusions.

The film begins in the Dry Season, tracing the tale of a man who drives a modern-day version of a rickshaw: a three-wheeled bicycle taxi, or cyclo. He falls in love with a high-society call girl, who spends the hot, dry months maneuvering her way out of poverty by sleeping with foreign men. Her character represents an underclass living in the back alleys of a growing city known as "the other world."

The film's second segment, which occurs during the Wet Season, follows an 8-year-old street peddler who loses his wooden case of Zippo lighters on a rainy night. During his search for the lighters, the boy meets a six-year-old orphan girl with whom he forms a silent bond. As these Buoi Doi (or "children of the night") make their way through the night world of Saigon, the city's drug dealers, prostitutes, trashy bars and clubs are revealed through their eyes. The boy eventually follows an ex-G.I. (Harvey Keitel, the only American actor in the cast) who he thinks may have stolen the case. The G.I. is on his own personal odyssey to find the half-Vietnamese daughter he has never met.

In the final segment, which unfolds in the Growth Season, the simple existence of a lotus picker is threatened by a company producing plastic lotuses that will never die. The woman's relationship with the reclusive lotus plantation master, an eccentric bard, is contrasted with the growing commercialization of the country.

The journey of *Three Seasons*, from poetic words on paper to location work in Vietnam, began when *Yellow Lotus* was screened at Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival. Bui was subsequently invited to participate in the Sundance Institute's prestigious

A cyclo falls in love with a high-society call girl in the Dry Season portion of the film, which is marked by warm colors and a dusty feeling.

Culture Clash



Above: The urban crush of Ho Chi Minh City. Bottom: Lisa Rinzler (left) and Tony Bui (far right) working on location.

month-long lab program, where he developed four scenes from the Three Seasons screenplay. "That experience changed my entire life," Bui recalls. "I came in contact with some of the most amazing filmmakers, writers and cinematographers. Michael Ballhaus [ASC] became a huge supporter and actually tried to help me get financing for the film. He was so helpful and humble. Allen Daviau [ASC] was also very generous. He actually read the script and gave me pointers about shooting in rain. We've become good friends, and I visit him on the set of whatever he's shooting. Those two guys were able to help me to interpret my project visually."

Bui brought the screenplay to every studio in Los Angeles. He encountered great enthusiasm, but not for the movie he was determined to make. "It was tough," Bui admits. "Every person who read it loved the script and thought it would make a great film, but they wanted to make *Three Seasons* in English, with as many American actors as possible. They also wanted me to change the story and make it more about Vietnam's past. Although everyone was interested and wanted to meet with me right away, I kept hearing

"I got off the plane in Vietnam, spent 10 minutes in the hotel and then went right to the production office. Ho Chi Minh City is very intense. It's just nonstop; New York City is rural by comparison!"

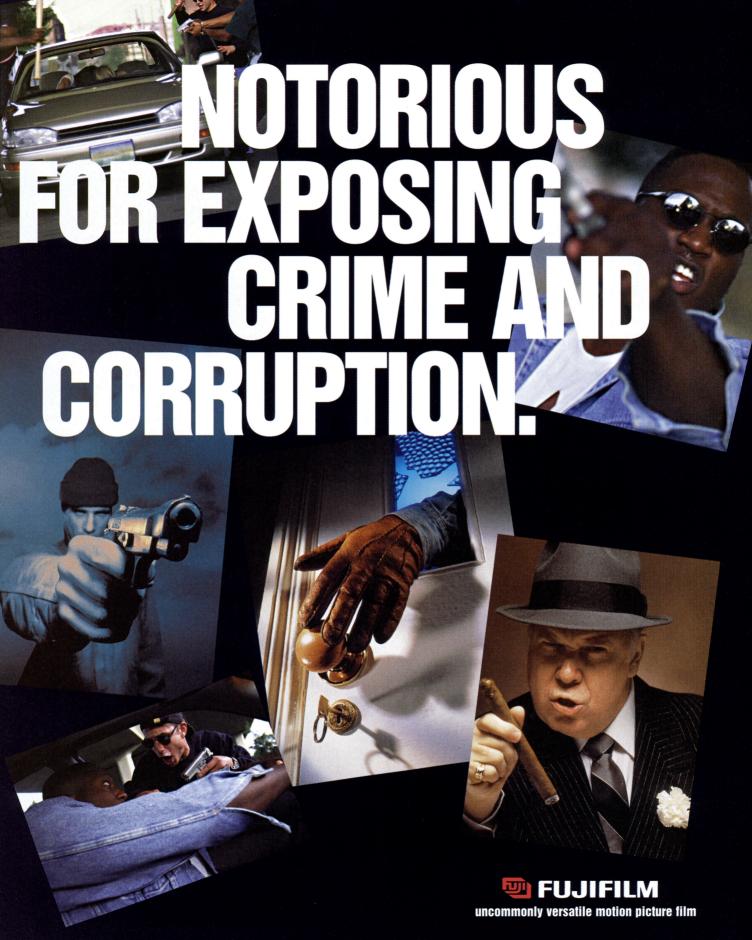
> — cinematographer Lisa Rinzler

things like 'We need changes, we can't do it the way you wrote it,' or 'What else are you working on?'"

Nevertheless, Bui held to his decision to make a Vietnamese film with regional actors, in his native language and on location. He found kindred spirits in producers Jason Kliot and Joana Vicente, who had founded the New York-based Open City Films, a production company dedicated to the discovery and advancement of groundbreaking independent visions in film. Then, October Films signed on as the distributor. Both companies were willing to risk financing and distributing a foreign film with virtually no commercial prospects, which also suffered from Vietnam's negative association with war. Bui recalls, "We were actually getting mail from people like the Argentinean Film Board to shoot it all in Argentina. Why? Because they have jungles and they automatically thought we were making a war film. We got that constantly once we said we wanted to film in Vietnam. Everybody automatically thought it had to be a war film, which made me drive even harder to make this film in the way that I did."

When Bui recognized that the film community in New York understood his intentions, he





Culture Clash

Right: The only
American actor
in the cast,
Harvey Keitel
portrays a G.I.
in search of the
daughter he
has never met.
Bottom: The
lush greenery
of Vietnam was
exploited for
the film's
Growth
Season.

decided that an East Coast-based cinematographer should photograph *Three Seasons*. "I think I met every single cinematographer in New York," Bui remembers. "Lisa Rinzler was the first person I met, and she left a strong impression on me. I then met at least 20 other cinematographers in the course of two weeks, but my mind always went back to her. I started comparing people to her without even realizing I was doing it, and I kept recalling things she had said."

Bui also admired Rinzler's work on Menace II Society and Dead Presidents (see AC Sept. 1995), which has earned the respect of many other young independent filmmakers as After attending NYU's undergraduate film school, the cinematographer began her career as an assistant to Nancy Schreiber, ASC on documentaries, and to Fred Murphy, ASC on feature films. This combined education in fiction and nonfiction shaped Rinzler's cinematic style on documentaries such as Hookers, Prostitutes, Pimps and Their Johns, No Sense of Crime, and the features True Love and Trees Lounge.

Rinzler's work is immediate, also offers expressive but photographic impressions. "She's such a poet in who she is," Bui explains. "Lisa has a lot of integrity. I wrote Three Seasons for a very important reason: to bring these stories to life, and to bring a humanity to the screen. I needed someone who understood that. I needed a human heart, and Lisa brought an amazing compassion to her understanding of the characters and their stories. I thought, 'Wow, if I team up with someone who has that sort of inner spirit, we'll really be able to do the right thing for this film."

In her work, Rinzler fully enters the worlds of the films she photographs. She immersed herself in urban African-American culture for *Menace II Society* and *Dead Presidents*, and in the Italian-



American experience for True Love. For Three Seasons, she stepped into an Asian society with her eyes and heart wide open. "I hit the ground running," Rinzler says. "I got off the plane in Vietnam, spent 10 minutes in the hotel and then went right to the production office. Ho Chi Minh City is very intense. It's just non-stop; New York City is rural by comparison! The density of the population alone is shocking. It's very hard to just physically cross the street. People get around by a combination of mopeds, bicycles and cyclos, so you literally have to wade into this sea of intense humanity and just have faith that you're going to make it to the other side. People eat squatting on the

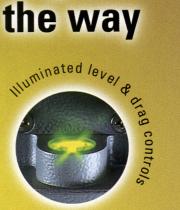
curbs with mopeds and exhaust rushing by. There was a clash of the old and the new. There were altars everywhere, but inside you'd find packs of Marlboro cigarettes or 100 percent synthetic, polyester-pink fabrics."

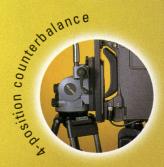
During prep, Rinzler and Bui screened Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams*, Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum*, *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*, and Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalgia*, all of which offer the kind of rich and poignant imagery that they felt would suit the lyric nature of the *Three Seasons* screenplay. In formulating a visual way to capture Vietnam's intense climate, they looked at *Do the Right Thing* and *A Dry White Season*, both of which deal



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Culture Clash

effectively with the element of heat. "We watched films for both their pros and cons," Bui explains. "We didn't want to use filters to make everything look hot."

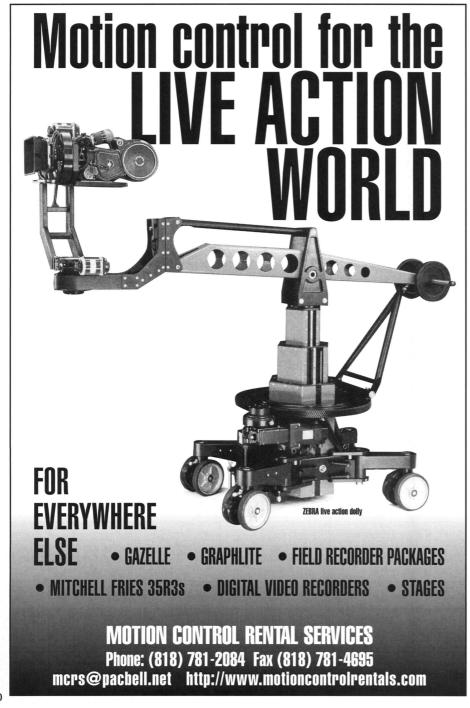
Rinzler also screened documentaries shot during the American involvement in Vietnam, and also footage of contemporary life there. The cinematographer found archival still photographs to be

especially helpful, and she often talked to Bui about her own work in photography, a passionate artistic endeavor which has informed her work with moving images. "Once I was in Vietnam, Mitch Epstein's book of photographs shot in Hanoi was very useful," Rinzler explains. "The text he wrote to accompany the images was exactly what I encountered when I was in Ho Chi

Minh City. [His book details] the new modernization and culture that's been caused by the Western culture clashing and washing over Vietnam's old, Eastern ways. His photographs reflected that trend and made me aware of it, and I certainly encountered that [cultural shift] in full force."

Indeed, the merging of Eastern and Western cultures in the country had a profound effect on the filmmakers' visual approach to Three Seasons. "The constant change was very symbolic," says Bui. "There was a home across from my apartment that had been around for decades, and it had chipped paint and a corroded building structure. As Lisa, my assistant director and I were storyboarding and talking about how to convey the sense of change in Vietnam, this building was slowly being reconstructed right in front of our eyes. It was not being rebuilt with any clear plan, which is what happens in most of Vietnam. As we were storyboarding, we would open our window, and on every new day something else was happening to this building. First, they repainted everything in a very bright color, because if somebody has money, they feel they have to just paint and repaint everything. Then one door would change, even though nothing to the left or right of the building was changing. On every block, one or two homes were being rebuilt, and every street was undergoing a transformation. One side of the street would have cement, and the other wouldn't; lightposts would go up in one area, but down the street there wouldn't be any.

"On the first day of production, we shot the cyclo driver coming home from work," he continues. "We shot in one direction where there was red dirt. The city governor waited for us to turn the camera 180 degrees to shoot the other angle, and then they came in and changed the entire block we had just shot. They literally



poured cement and put in new fences as we were shooting. When I was there in 1992, a lot of the old French architecture was still around. but now it's practically all gone. Saigon is continuing to develop and remodel, develop and remodel. So much beautiful architecture is being torn down for these very quick, cheaply constructed buildings that are economically effective, but not as visually stunning. Saigon is really trying to modernize into this efficient, quick, simple city."

Working closely with her director, Rinzler created a visual scenario for each section of the film, and met the tremendous challenges that come with working on location in Vietnam. "The Dry Season was warm in color, a tonality which is always a hard thing to achieve," she explains. "It's easy to fall into an overly romantic effect, which wasn't what interested us. We wanted a dusty, golden feeling. The Dry Season took place predominately on a moving cyclo, but in Vietnam there's no such thing as a Shotmaker truck. Instead, we used a Jeep with bad shocks — or seemingly no shocks at all — as a camera car. The streets of Ho Chi Minh City can be potholed and bumpy. A cyclo is approximately 8' long, and the camera lens on our Jeep was approximately 12' from the actors. As a result, we were forced to use a 75mm or 100mm lens for close-ups — lenses that are, quite frankly, too long for unsteady moving-vehicle shots with dialogue. Bumpy footage would have distracted from the story, so we brought in Will Arnot on Steadicam to minimize bumpiness of the roads. Another time, we used the Steadicam to create a makeshift crane, since the only one available to us was ancient, unsafe, and too heavy to move onto location. We created a rig which allowed the operator to simply walk down a ladder, creating a cranelike effect.

"The Wet Season mostly took

place at night, and we made rain throughout, working with rather antiquated rain towers. A special effects expert came in from Los Angeles and trained the Vietnamese in the placement and operation of the nozzles. There was a learning curve involved, and a certain beauty in the collaboration of skills and countries. The Vietnamese and the American crews enjoyed one

another.

"The Growth Season was lush and springlike, it was about rebirth," she continues. "Working on a temple in the middle of a lake involved serious lighting limitations, due to the distance of the land banks to the temple and the smallness of the units and rigging possibilities.

"While our camera package was generously donated to us by



Culture Clash

Panavision, our lighting package was a bit too small and basic. We were hurting for large units; our biggest fixture was a 12K. When units went down, we found ourselves making due with Pars and 10Ks, because it took 10 days to get gear back into the country.

"There were also other unforeseen challenges due to the weather. We had postponed production until the end of the rainy season, and began shooting with the Dry Season, but the rainy season was stubborn. For the first week of exteriors, we had bright sun every morning until lunch, and then overcast skies for the remainder of the day. That made matching light within a scene a real struggle; at times, we were forced to split scenes between days."

Language was an obstacle, although Rinzler notes that some gestures are universal. "It was

"Every day, the censor or the censor's helper would get together with the loader. Every can of film had a piece of paper on it, and they all had to be signed."

Camera assistant Richard Rutkowski

fascinating working in a foreign tongue. As I read the scenes each night before shooting, I could not follow the dialogue literally. As multiple takes progressed, however, I found myself noticing the changes in the actors; I found that I could feel the emotions within the scene without knowing their language."

Rinzler's crew consisted of both American and Vietnamese craftspeople. Assistant cameraman, Richard Rutkowski and gaffer Tristan Sheridan joined the production from New York. Key grip Tom Harjo flew in from Los Angeles. Each of these technicians also brought assistants from the States. The best boy and dolly grip were Vietnamese. When the shooting schedule was extended beyond its original length, assistant cameraman Alec Boehme, who had worked with Rinzler on Dead Presidents, took over for Rutkowski. "We also had a loader named Yen, who was a very accomplished camera assistant," Rutkowski recalls. "Yen had never had access to Panavision cameras before, so he was fascinated. Whenever we could find some time, we showed him how things worked. Yen is an excellent camera assistant who has shot numerous films in his own right. He worked on features in Vietnam, and we found ourselves hoping he wouldn't get any other work until we were done - he was



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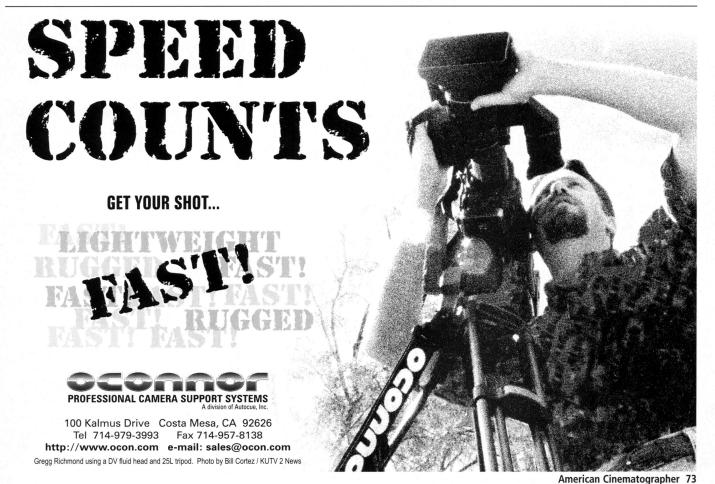
irreplaceable."

The production's camera gear was attained through Panavision's New Filmmakers program. Kelly Simpson, who is part of the company's education department, coordinated the package, which featured a Panaflex Platinum camera and Ultraspeed lenses shipped over from the firm's Woodland Hills facility. During the shoot, the Platinum was constantly switched back and forth between Steadicam and dolly mode. After several days of shooting in rain, the camera became waterlogged. Assistant cameraman Rutkowski attempted to dry it out in his hotel room, but the internal mechanisms remained too moist to continue. The Platinum had to be sent back to Panavision's repair experts in Woodland Hills, who fixed and returned the camera within a week — a remarkable feat, given the inevitable shipping logistics and customs bureaucracy. During the down time, Rinzler and her crew worked with a backup camera sent in from Hong Kong: a Panavision Super PSR, which is as large as a vintage Mitchell. It took two crew members to assemble the camera, which was then placed within an enormous blimp. In order to protect the film stock from the intense heat and humidity on location, an air conditioner was set up in the darkroom of the camera truck.

Performance Services in Canada outfitted the production with lighting and grip equipment. The lighting package contained several large HMIs, Kino Flos and a standard set of quartz instruments, the latter of which Rinzler often utilized with Chimeras. In Saigon, the production received additional assistance from a French production company which normally services commercial shoots in the country.

For the American crew, which was used to relying on the level of technical support readily available in New York and Los Angeles, shooting on location in Vietnam was an eye-opening experience. "It's not like the States," Rutkowski confirms. "There's isn't a camera or lighting rental house just down the street. If you need a camera piece, you're most likely going to have to find the only guy in the country who owns one. Everybody in Vietnam has a little cottage business."

The *Three Seasons* company worked through many obstacles. In addition to the lack of state-of-the-art equipment, the filmmakers never saw dailies and worked under the constant eye of government censors. They were further hampered by the slow customs process, which delayed their ability to move equipment and film from the States. "Every day, the censor or the censor's helper would

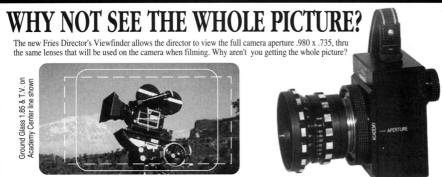




The 435 is a spinning mirror reflex camera with a 170 degree blanking shutter. The internal 30VDC motor runs the camera from 2 to 150 FPS forward and 2 to 50 FPS reverse, in one frame increments all crystal. The camera is equipped with take-up and supply torque motors.

There are both 1000 ft. and 400 ft. displacement type magazines. A new feature is the light valve which allows the operator to direct all the light to the viewing system, or to the video assist, or combo which splits the light between both viewing and video assist.





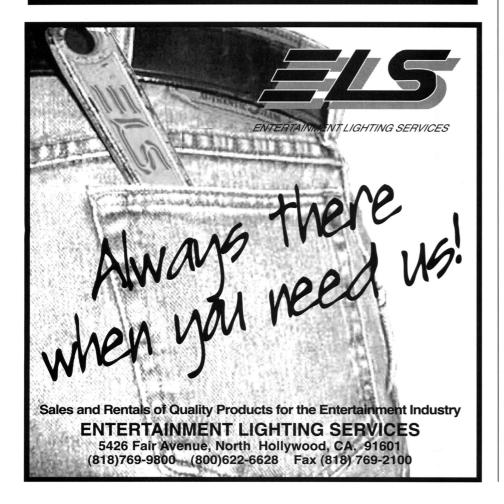
Film Clip: The finder has a set of register pins that will hold a film clip the same as the Fries camera. Groundglasses: Interchangeable. The same groundglass as is used in the Fries 35R and 35R3 cameras.

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get together with the loader," Richard Rutkowski explains. "Every can of film had a piece of paper on it, and they all had to be signed."

A small local lab was used to develop camera tests, but the production's footage was processed at DuArt in Manhattan. Steve Blakely screened all of the material and sent the camera crew extensive technical e-mails concerning timing lights and the relative photographic quality of the scenes.

Due to budgetary limitations, Rinzler shot the film on Eastman Kodak's EXR 5248 and 5298 stocks. rather than the newer Vision negatives. Bui's admiration for Italian neorealist films such as The Bicycle Thief and Umberto D, combined with Rinzler's quest to merge documentary truth with simple yet carefully designed fictional imagery, turned the limitations into an asset. Their "direct cinema" approach conveys the tradition and change of Vietnam in pure expressive images that allow the viewer to discover a country long inaccessible to Western eyes.

The American crew was awed by the quality of natural light in Vietnam. They were familiar with the special beauty of shooting at magic hour, but the light in Vietnam held its own secrets. Each day before sunset, the sky changed colors, and the light turned soft and mysterious — for less than an hour. The crew had to act quickly, switching film stocks or force-developing a roll to capture the unique ambience. Mornings would deliver a warm, mustard-yellow light.

For the viewer, the film's image-driven narrative is rich, lush, and, at times, truly epic in scope. With the war in Vietnam long over, *Three Seasons* represents a cinematic beginning that allows the audience to see the country as it sees itself. The time for politics and rhetoric have past, and the artists have begun their pilgrimage.

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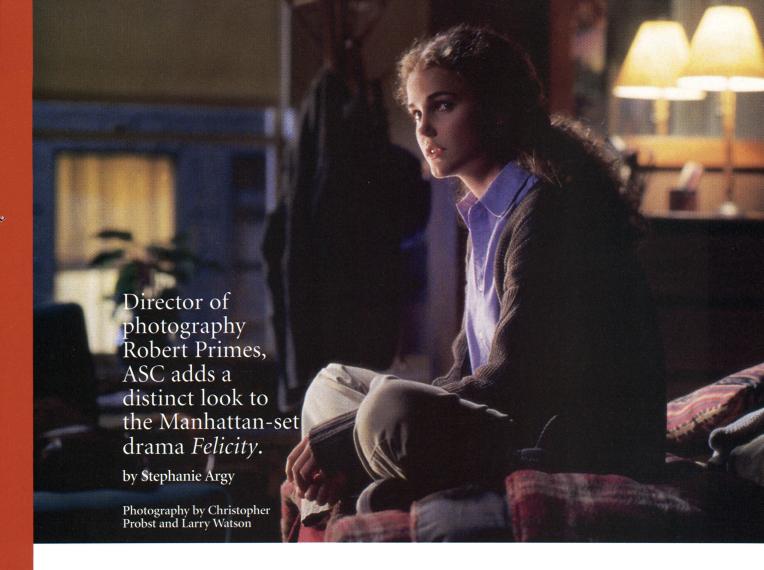


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Big-City It

hile shooting the hit Imagine Television/WB Network show Felicity, a series about a young woman's life in New York City, cinematographer Robert Primes, ASC strives to create naturalistic photography to illustrate the show's character-driven plot lines. "Very often, it's easy to want to show off your work," the cameraman offers. "You want to use colors, smoke, and showy compositions, but that approach would be completely wrong for this show. We don't want to take the audience out of the reality of the story. The show must be visually dramatic, but not to the point where it seems inappropriate or unrealistic. The photographic drama must always be at the service of the emotions that are inherent in the script." Nevertheless, the series, which chronicles the travails of Felicity Porter (Keri Russell), who follows high-school crush Ben Covington (Scott Speedman) to the ficticious University of New York — loosely patterned on the real-life NYU offers Primes ample opportunity for poignant cinematic storytelling.

Primes inherited Felicity from cinematographer Richard Fannin, who had shot the show's pilot. "He did some wonderful work," Primes attests. "There was one sequence set in a stairway with the shades drawn, and they just played the scene against the shades in silhouette. It was wonderful - very graphic. I loved the pilot and thought it was very beautifully done."

As much as he admired the photography, though, Primes was even more impressed by the show's writing and directing. "The pilot had real heart," he says. "It was about real people, not overgrown heroes. The conflicts were internal ones about making decisions, rather than external situations involving people with guns, emergencies, or things like that. It wasn't hyped-up reality. It was everyday reality examined under a very caring magnifier."

In its themes and tone, Felicity reminded Primes of the series thirtysomething, the first season of which he had shot 11 years earlier. "Thirtysomething was one of the first shows to come along in a long while that was just about real people and their fears, joys, relationships, and other concerns," he maintains. That series also served as a model for Matt Reeves and J.J. Abrams, the executive producers of Felicity, and Primes reasons that the fact that he had photographed the first 22 episodes of the trendsetting show certainly didn't hurt him in their eyes.

The director of photography's resumé also includes 1995 Emmy and Cable ACE Awards for the touching telefilm My Antonia, and an ASC Award nomination for the pilot of the series Reasonable Doubts. His other credits include 11 episodes of the series Quantum Leap, as well as the features Bird on a Wire, The Hard Way and the hit comedy Money Talks (on which he shared a credit with Russell Carpenter, ASC).

Reeves had directed the pilot of Felicity, and he and Fannin established certain stylistic characteristics that the executive wanted to maintain in the series. "They used very long lenses and very soft light, and there was very little camera movement," says Primes. Reeves also

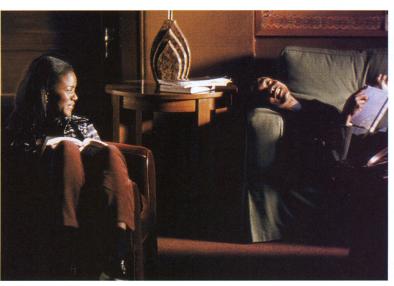


wanted the reality-based series shot without any filtration. The cinematographer did numerous tests and showed him various combinations, and while Reeves conceded that the filtered images were pretty, he stuck to his guns. "We're not even carrying any diffusion filters," Primes reports.

Nevertheless, Primes realized that over the course of the series, the guidelines established by Reeves would evolve. "I knew that each of the directors we'd be working with would have their own way of seeing things," he says. "For example, I knew that we wouldn't stick to using ultralong lenses for the whole series; since then, we've shot a lot at 17mm and a lot at 275mm."

The amount of camera movement also depends on who is directing the week's episode. "When Matt

Opposite: Felicity (Keri Russell) contemplates life in the Big Apple. Above: Primes and series executive producer/ episode director J.J. Abrams confer on a shot with the aid of a handheld Watchman. Below: A prime example of Felicity's illumination design, which often utilizes strong, soft sidelight.



Big-City Girl

Above: Primes sets up for an angle on Felicity - here using a standin to rough-in the lighting. The scene was lit by two 5K Fresnel lamps aimed through the venetianblinded windows and a 20K — fitted with a Chimera lightbank and honevcomb grid — aimed from above the set walls as a 3/4-back keylight. Below: Prior to rolling cameras on Russell. Primes added a 4' x 4' beadboard to provide some soft fill on the actress.



Reeves comes on, he keeps the moves very, very simple," says Primes. "We'll work the compositions very carefully together, and he'll make very exquisite, simple shots — not simple as far as composition is concerned, but simple in terms of the camera moves." Other directors, however, have a more mobile camera style. Tom Moore, for example, has a background in theater, which influences his approach to staging. "Tom is a brilliant choreographer, so having 7-, 8- or 9-part dolly moves is very much the case on the shows he directs," says Primes. "He's very good with that, which is lovely. As a cineamtographer, I love a director who offers different ideas on how to do things. It'd be stifling if I said to them, 'Well, no, we do it this way, or this way, or this way."

Though Primes has now worked on three different network series, he admits that he has a certain resistance to shooting episodic television. "It's such a grind, and the danger is that you see the same sets week after week," he says. "The reason I quit thirtysomething was that I'd done those sets for a year, and I figured, 'I don't have anything more to contribute to these sets." On Felicity, too, Primes is forced to spend more time than he might like on the show's standing sets, built in a complex of three converted warehouses in Culver City. But on this show, he adds, the challenge is even greater, because the stages were not designed for film production. The buildings don't have catwalks or room for proper TransLights and backings. In addition, the floors are not smooth, which means that every time Primes and his crew are asked to do a complex dolly move, they must lay down a dance floor. "It's not the best situation, and we really don't have perfect solutions to everything," Primes admits. "That sometimes makes shooting the show physically difficult."

The stages have also become painfully overcrowded. "There is maybe room for eight sets on the three stages," says Primes. "Originally, we had a generic classroom that was going to be used for three or four different classrooms, a dorm hallway, the dorm lounge, Felicity's dorm room, a cafeteria, and Ben's loft. Well, they keep adding places and rooms, including a library, administrative halls, and things like that. We're constantly building more sets."

Once built, the sets have to be lit, a task that can often be more difficult than expected. The cafeteria, for example, is in a space that Primes describes as a kind of Quonset hut, a building never intended to be a stage. The roof beams are non-structural, so the crew can't hang lights from them. As a result, the large set must be lit entirely from the floor.

For the other sets, Primes and his crew have hung permanent lights overhead. "Every 10 or 12 feet, there's a 5K," he says. "We hung lights, put them on dimmers, and did all of the cabling for the standing sets." The problem is that when sets are taken down and replaced, the new ones don't have the same dimensions. As Primes notes, "Our permanent lights are often rendered useless because they're in the wrong place."

Even the dismantled sets can cause difficulties. "Where do we store them?" Primes asks. "We don't have a scene dock, so they're sometimes right outside the windows of the standing sets. Sometimes we can't get a light through because sets are stored back there! There's a lot of



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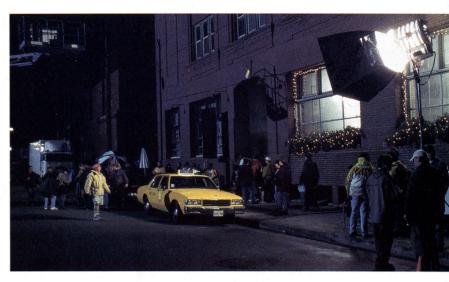
Above: For a scene in which a central character gets hit by a bus, the production took to the streets in downtown Los Angeles, which stands in for the series' New York locale. **Below: Primes** meters for a gray card with camera assistant Timothy Tillman.

fighting for space between the construction, set dressing, lighting and grip crews."

The work is also complicated by the pace of the television schedule. Traditionally, the director of photography on a series gets no prep time for each episode. "We've got a few weeks of prep at the beginning of the show to get the equipment ordered, the crew picked, and the stage rigged. But after that, the eight days of prep are happening concurrently to our eight days of shooting. The gaffer, the key grip and I never go out to see the locations. Occasionally, if something is tricky, we'll take a trip after work or on a Sunday. But as a rule, the directors prep with the ADs, and the best boys go out for a day and report back to us. What they've given us is a halfhour in the morning, ahead of the normal call time, when the director, the AD, the UPM, the gaffer, the key grip and I go through the day's work."

In spite of these difficulties, Primes has managed to carefully maintain the photographic approach that Reeves wants for the show. "Almost all of the light is soft, and it's very often shining through Chimeras, or frames of 1000H, Chimera cloth, 216, 250 or opal," says Primes. "Those are the diffusion materials we use."

This illumination is usually punctuated with hard light used to create shafts of sunlight slashing through the sets. "One of the nice things about hard light is that you can really shape it," says Primes. "But how do you cut soft light?" In recent years, the cinematographer has found the answer in Chimera's honeycomb grids, which attach in front of the company's flexible softboxes to concentrate the light, rather than letting it scatter. The grids come in 30-, 60- and 90-degree increments, referring to the angles to which the light is allowed to spread. "In the past, I was using the 60s most of the time, the 90s some of the time, and the 30s not very much," says



Primes. On *Felicity*, however, gaffer Marshall Adams has pushed the grids farther than Primes ever had before. "Marshall started using the 30-degree grid, which takes a tremendous amount of light. You need 10,000 watts to get anything out of it, and by golly, there it is, just a soft little spotlight. You can have someone in a little glow, and light nowhere else."

Because of their heavy reliance on Chimeras and soft-lighting, Primes and Adams use more powerful fixtures than one might expect. "Our extra smallest Chimeras use 650W tweenies, while our largest use 20Ks," he notes.

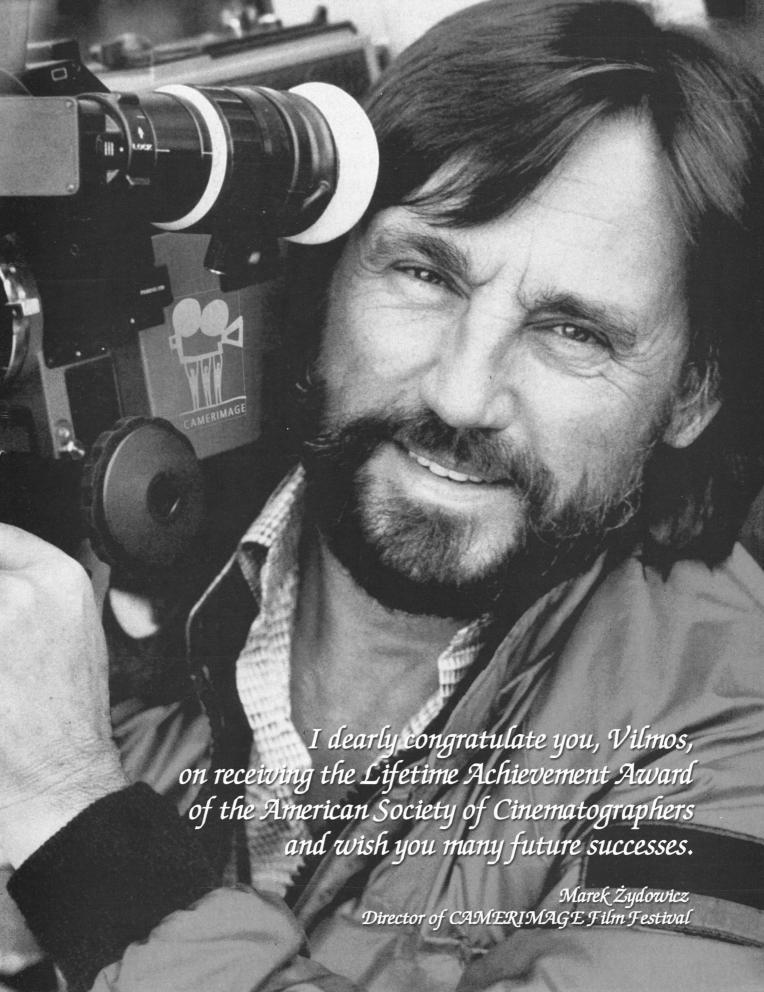
Additionally, Primes often employs a few Kino Flo fixtures, as well as a lot of Source Four ellipsoidal

lamps: "The Source Fours are a very hard light that you can bounce into a card, and then contain the spill. They're just 575 watts, but they're 95 percent efficient, so sometimes they'll do the work of a 5K light."

Because *Felicity* is about emotions and relationships, Primes tries to emphasize the characters as much as possible in the way he shoots and lights. Much of the show plays in closeup, so he tries to design the lighting for the best possible portraiture. "We try to light from the floor as much as we can, because lights above or below eye-level are better for portraiture. If you light from high up, the actor's eyes can be shadowed."

For the world outside the





Big-City Girl

windows of the sets, production designer Woody Crockett took a three-dimensional approach. "Instead of just using TransLights, Woody and the art department constructed scenic backgrounds made of plasticformed buildings," Primes reveals. "You can put lights in the windows, change the curtains, and illuminate them in different ways. We generally light them to be white, blue or gold, depending upon the time of day we're trying to create. If it's supposed to be dusk, we'll sometimes use gold light coming in through the shades, and then add some blue light to suggest the blue canyons of New York City. We'll also put a token amount of light on the building backdrops at night, so that you can just barely feel them. For a sunset effect, we'll use a full or 1/2 CTO."

Felicity also does some shooting on location. On average, one day out of an episode's eight-day shoot is

"We love to do
elaborate shots —
they're great. But the
elaborate shot will
often put us behind
schedule, and once
you're behind schedule,
the whole mentality of
the crew changes. It's
hard to do work that's
as good, because it's
hard to be as particular.
If you're being
pressured, it's harder to
be bold."

cinematographerRobert Primes, ASC

spent away from the soundstage. "Because our show is set in New York City, we have to have location work that looks like Manhattan," says Primes. The show has used locations in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles, where some of the building facades can pass for those in New York City. The crew has also worked in downtown Los Angeles, as well as on the backlot at Paramount. "I've also been to Manhattan for a week to shoot real locations, generally exteriors, with some of the cast members."

During one location day in New York, the production decided on the spur of the moment to shoot some footage in the subway. The crew sneaked a camera and a set of baby support legs into the station, hiding the gear under coats, and then surreptitiously photographed star Keri Russell, all the while keeping an eye out for the Transit Police. "It was just like we were film students," the

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cameraman says with a chuckle.

Primes has to make sure that the material shot in Manhattan will match work done on the soundstage and in Los Angeles. One of the show's standing sets in Culver City, for example, is a Dean and Deluca coffee bar, a smaller version of a real establishment in New York City. "The interior of our set doesn't match the real thing exactly, so we try not to see too far into the real location when we're shooting in New York," says Primes. "The producers would like to do perfect matching because they're sticklers for realism, but in truth, you sometimes have to make a few concessions to logistics and the schedule."

One thing that has surprised Primes about working on *Felicity* is the authority of the show's producers. "I'm from the school of film that is used to the director being the final say on anything aesthetic. On most

[feature] sets, the director's word is it," he says. "In television, there's a different school of thought. The director is invited in as a guest for each episode, and the producers are expected to hold the continuity of quality together."

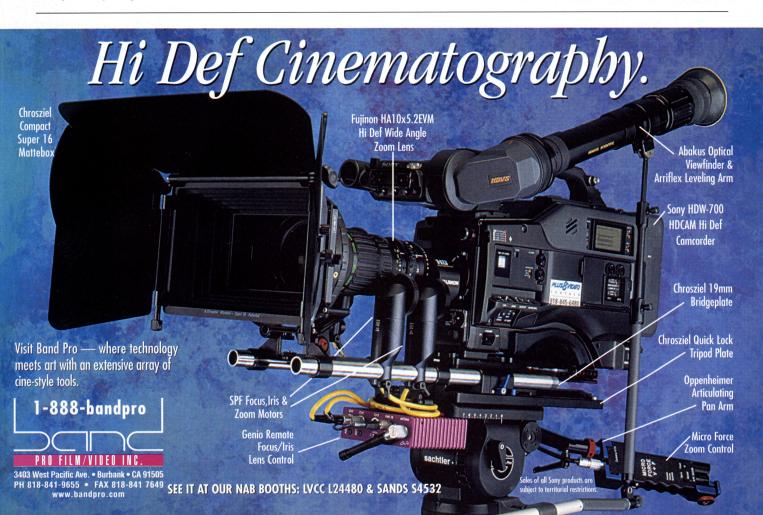
However, too much on-set discussion can also slow the crew down, especially while working at TV-schedule pace. "It's a struggle to keep our days to 12 hours," says Primes. "If a director wants some elaborate shot, we'll generally do it. We love to do elaborate shots they're great. But the elaborate shot will often put us behind schedule, and once you're behind schedule, the whole mentality of the crew changes. It's hard to do work that's as good, because it's hard to be as particular. If you're being pressured, it's harder to be bold."

It's also more difficult to find time to add the little touches that can

elevate the cinematography above the ordinary. "That's why a lot of people don't want to do episodic work," says Primes. "The only solution I've been able to find is to have a good crew that's very efficient."

Primes is extremely happy with his crew, which includes not only gaffer Adams, but also key grip Duane Journey, camera operators Aaron Pizanti, Richard Walden and Ian Dodd, camera assistants Steve Mann, Joel Schwartz, Timothy Tillman and Scott Martinez. The cinematographer says that he and Adams have worked out a technique to speed things along, making sure that Primes roughs out the lighting with the crew before he starts setting up a shot with the director. "Sometimes, by the time we get the shot set, it's lit, because we have a good crew that's fast," the cameraman says.

Primes also tries to push things along by using a second







Big-City Girl

camera. "I'd say half the time, we have two cameras," he says. "If you're trying to shoot an episodic schedule, the ability to get two cameras going can save a tremendous amount of time. We've therefore learned to use two cameras in a way that doesn't compromise us. I can do a nice, tight, telephoto single and an over-the-shoulders at the same time, without messing up the eyelines. We don't try to use the second camera on every shot during the day, though, because that ends up compromising quality."

The main cameras on the show are two Panavision Golds. Primes submits, "It was tough deciding whether to go with a Moviecam, which we'd get from Clairmont, Panaflexes, or an Arri 535B. The advantage of the Moviecam is that it can do 50 frames per second; the advantage of the Arri 535B is that it can do 60 frames per second."

The ability to shoot at a high speed was important, because slow motion is another of the show's stylistic motifs. "When characters aren't talking, but simply thinking and being contemplative, we show that by shooting at 48 frames per second," says Primes, who adds that the 48 fps standard was chosen by executive producer Reeves. "They did that in the pilot, and he liked the feel of it."

Nevertheless, Primes decided to shoot with Panavisions and keep an Arri 35-III on hand for the slowmotion sequences. The reason, he says, was Panavision's T2.8 24-275mm Primo zoom, which he considers the perfect main lens for a long-lens show. "I like it better than the Angenieux HR or Cooke 10:1 zooms, mainly because the Primo is a bit faster, has a bit more range, and doesn't 'breathe.' What I mean is that when you're doing a focus shift, you don't see a zoom. Since we use long lenses a lot, and shift focus a lot, that little zooming would probably have driven me crazy. We also carry a 4:1 [Primo 17.5-75mm] that we use quite a bit. When we have two cameras running, which we do fairly frequently, we'll generally have the 4:1 on one and the 11:1 on the other."

The cinematographer's equipment also includes a full range of Primo primes. "We carry a 17mm, 20mm, 24mm, 29mm, 40mm, 50mm, 75mm, 100mm and 150mm," he says. "They're all very fast — we use them for night work and the Steadicam. We do very little handheld work, but we use those lenses for it."

The main heads Primes uses on the show are a Panahead and an O'Connor 2575 Ultimate. "We sometimes carry a Weaver/Steadman when we're going very low to the ground, or doing inverted shots," he adds. As for dollies, the show started off on a Chapman PeeWee 3, but as the filmmakers began to do more and more two-camera work, it became economical to keep two dollies on hand. "In additon to the PeeWee 3, we now have a Chapman hybrid as well. We bring in cranes or jib arms for special use, as needed."

According to Primes, 95 percent of *Felicity* is shot on Eastman Kodak's 500 ASA EXR 5298, and the rest on 200 ASA 5293. "The difference between 5298 and [Vision 500T] 5279 is sharpness and grain, more than anything else, and that can't be seen on NTSC television," he opines. "Besides, I love the latitude and low-end curve of the 98."

The look on *Felicity* tends to be low-key, with Primes letting many scenes go very dark. "The reason why most cinematographers like things to be dark is that if you show everything there's no mystery," he explains. "And if there's no mystery, you're not compelling your audience to be curious. If a face is dark and rim-lit, except for a little gleam off the lips, your eyes are going to be looking at the lips. A lot of the art of cinematography is what you hide and what you reveal. Without shadows, you can't hide."

Primes's most common stop while shooting the show is T2.8,





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which is wide-open on the Primo 11:1 zoom. "We're not going for a particular stop; we light till it looks good," he says. "I don't pull out my meter until the very end. If you meter too much, it becomes intellectual rather than visceral. You want to feel it."

"The reason why most cinematographers like things to be dark is that if you show everything there's no mystery. And if there's no mystery, you're not compelling your audience to be curious."

cinematographer
 Robert Primes, ASC

A key concern of directors of photography working in television today is what to do about the coming HD 16 x 9 aspect ratio. With some stations already broadcasting a widescreen digital signal, and the rest scheduled to follow suit over the next eight years, networks, production companies and the cinematographers who work for them have to weigh whether they want to compose solely for today's 1.33:1 aspect ratio, or for 16 x 9 as well. "Sometimes the networks ask us to protect for both; that doesn't really work for me, because it doesn't make sense to have everything in the middle and nothing of importance on the sides," says Primes. "Frankly, it's just poor composition that no self-respecting director or director of photography could be proud of. There is no such thing as being able to compose well for two formats at the same time.

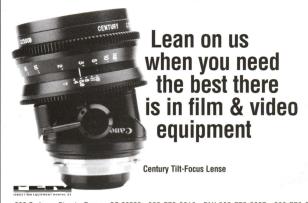
"I believe digital TV is coming, for years I have asked the producers, 'Can we shoot this in 16 by 9?' And every time, they've said no. I'd be delighted to shoot *Felicity* in 16 by 9, and compose to 16 by 9, and show it

letterboxed on television. I think the networks are nuts for not doing that. It protects your future."

Primes believes that if shows aren't shot specifically for 16 x 9, the correct way to show them is in their original 1.33 aspect ratio. Once he commits to shooting in 1.33, he becomes reluctant to compromise today's image for that of tomorrow. For example, he shoots Felicity with a lot of backlight, and sometimes the only way to prevent a lens flare is to put a flag in the area that would have to be protected for 16 x 9 presentation. "My guys don't do it recklessly," he says. "We don't do it maliciously. We don't do it unless we have to. But here's my rule: we will always protect 16 by 9, unless it costs us significant time, jeopardizes the schedule or sacrifices quality. I won't have inferior 1.33 images — if that's what they're going to be showing — just to protect 16 by 9."

Instead of forcing artists into compromises between two formats, Primes says, the networks should commit to both 16 x 9 and digital television and begin preparing home viewers for the change. "They should have a logo and a fanfare that says something like, 'A Warner Brothers widescreen production designed for the coming digital television revolution!' The networks are afraid that people will think, 'There's something wrong with my set,' and tune out. All you've got to do is say, 'There's nothing wrong with your set. This is the shape of television to come, and you're on the cutting edge.' They can just word it positively and start producing shows in 16 by 9."

Looking beyond the technical issues he must deal with on a shot-by-shot basis while filming *Felicity*, Primes concludes, "What I try not to lose track of is that we try to play scenes out in silhouette and in shadows. That's still the goal, but sometimes, under the pressure of time, it's one that we can't achieve as often as we would hope to."



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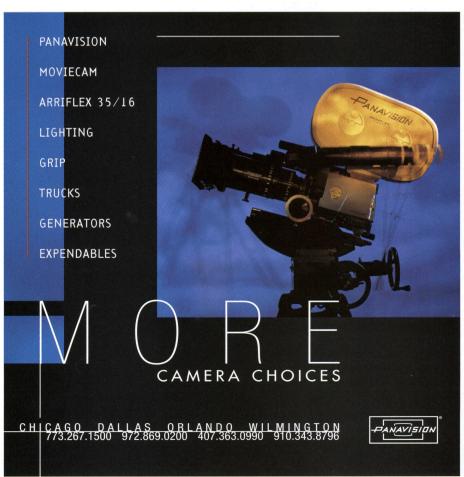
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Seeing is Believing

AC profiles Panavision's depth-defying Frazier Lens system and its inventor.

by Christopher Probst

Photography by Christopher Probst and David E. Williams

ward-winning documentary cinematographer Jim Frazier, ACS began shooting 16mm wildlife films in the jungles and outback of Australia, where his fascination with the macro and microscopic worlds of tiny critters and scurrying insects posed a seemingly endless array of technical hurdles. It was the late 1960s, and many of the cinematographic tools Frazier required to achieve the views he envisioned were either scarce or nonexistent. In fact, the most significant technical breakthrough Frazier made at the time was to obtain a zoom lens, which had just become readily available to working cinematographers.

"When I started shooting wildlife documentaries for the BBC," relates Frazier, "I didn't realize that I had immersed myself in a field that

was so difficult. Not only was macro and micro photography a difficult area of cinematography, but my subjects were often completely unpredictable, which made it difficult to even keep them in focus! The photographic techniques used on those films often required a lot of special optical equipment, so I spent a lot of time devising equipment and unique apparatus."

A Closer Look

with most macrophotography techniques, Frazier was battling the extremely magnified factors that one encounters while making such a close inspection of minute organisms — including vibrations created by his own breath buffeting his subjects. Up until the recent developments of such tools as periscopes, boroscopes, probe, and pitching lenses, there were only two basic approaches to obtaining closeup, macro views of small subjects, utilized and Frazier these interchangeably, depending on the shooting situation and the subject. The first technique involved using wide-angle lenses close to his subjects and stopping down near f22 to maximize his depth of field. This technique was cumbersome, however. Lighting the subject to the high intensity required by the f-stop sometimes became nearly impossible due to the close proximity of the camera. Also, focusing on subjects a few inches from the lens resulted in gross distortion of perspective.

Frazier's other option involved utilizing extremely long lenses, such as a 600mm, upon which he would stack several diopters in order to focus on his subjects. This technique allowed Frazier more room for his lights, but even with stops of f16 or f22, the depth of field was a mere fraction of an inch. After much practice, however, Frazier became keenly adept at quickly racking focus when an insect or some jittery arachnid wouldn't cooperate by



hitting its marks. In this manner, the director of photography produced startling, award-winning imagery. Nevertheless, he still longed for a device that would aid - and not hinder — his vision of what the macro world should look like: a highly magnified inspection of an object with no linear distortion and abundant depth of field. Determined to make this visionary concept a reality, he began building his own experimental optical systems.

An Education in Optics

"I have found myself lying on the ground for most of my career," Frazier notes with a laugh, in reference to his constant low-angle, grass-roots (pun intended) methods. "I was always looking for unusual angles. But in filming those low

angles, I wanted to move the camera away from my subjects. I wasn't content to look down at their world: I really wanted to see that world from their point of view. Toward that end, my first foray into optics literally involved gluing a mirror onto the end of a stick that was taped to a lens. Of course, the problem with that technique was that the insect would then go one way, and I'd pan the other!

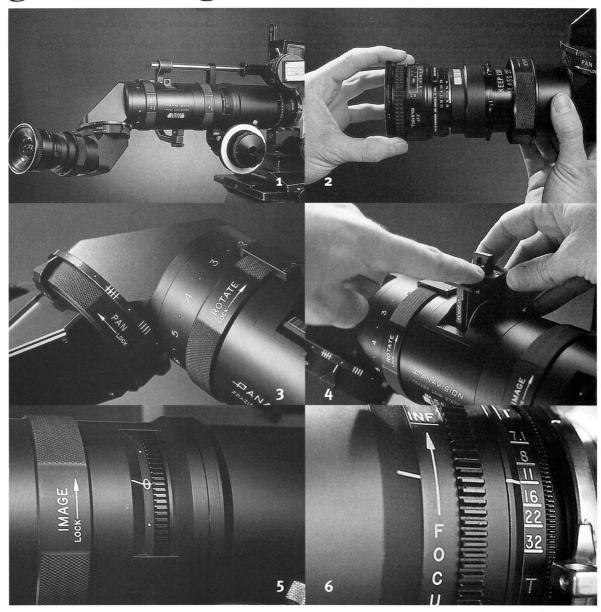
"To me, optics were absolutely essential to get me where I wanted to go," he continues. "I literally pulled hundreds of lenses to pieces to get the elements out, and began playing with different combinations. My initial system of lens design consisted of a board with some modeling clay on it that I would stick the various lenses in while looking through with

Opposite: Inventor Jim Frazier poses with his brainchild, the culmination of over 20 years of optics efforts. Left: Shooting in the outback of Australia, Frazier works with his mainstay 16mm Bolex camera, fitted with an early rightangle lens. Below: Panavision's "breadboard" test model of the Frazier system. A stillphoto lens is married to a combination of field lenses, a mirror angled at 45 degrees (to execute the first swivel), an amici roof-edge prism (for the second swivel and to maintain proper image geometry) and a pechan prism (serving as the system's image rotator).



Seeing is Believing

1) The Frazier Lens System, mounted on a **Platinum Panaflex** camera. 2) Panavision's marketing and technical representative Jim Roudebush displays the ease of mounting one of the Frazier's taking lenses. 3) The multifunctional, dual-swivel tip, shown with its engraved position indicators and locking mechanism. 4) The system's drop-in polarizing filter allows one to turn a filter while it is seated inside the unit's optics. 5) The image rotator also features inscribed position indication and lock-down capability. 6) Focus and iris controls are located at the back of the unit and work with standard **Panavision** accessories.



a viewfinder. I spent many months and countless thousands of hours knee-deep in optics.

"By trial and error, I eventually came upon the system of optics that ultimately produced the Frazier lens. I'll never forget it the moment I came upon that [optical configuration]. I was doing what I normally did — swapping optics around — and then I suddenly saw what I was looking for. That was it! I literally did somersaults and had to look again. At that point, I knew that I was close to what I had envisioned."

Frazier Lens Focal Lengths

(Labeled As)		(Equivalent)
14mm	-	9.9mm
17mm	_	12mm
20mm	_	14mm
24mm (pc/slant)	_	17mm
28mm	-	20mm
35mm (pc)	-	25mm
45mm (pc/slant)	_	32mm
50mm	_	35mm
85mm	_	60mm
105mm	_	75mm
135mm	_	95mm

Early Prototypes

Frazier built a prototype of his optical system for his 16mm camera and astonished viewers worldwide with the resulting footage. However, when a colleague urged him to build a 35mm version of the system for commercial work, the inventor had to start from scratch, scaling up all of the optical elements to accommodate the larger format. "I had to find much larger and higher-quality optics for the 35mm version," Frazier recounts. "I actually pulled some very expensive lenses to bits to get the optics I needed. The original 35mm



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Above: Conducting a presentation at Panavision's headquarters in Woodland Hills, Frazier devises a shot - with media director Karen Heller of Sold Worldwide to illustrate his lens's ability to utilize depth of field to trick the perception of size and spatial relationships. Below: Two resulting film clips (Vision 500T 5279 stock provided by Eastman Kodak and printed by Deluxe Laboratories) shows the dynamic depth range of the lens

prototype was just a right-angled model with one swivel, for which I got a fairly high-quality amici prism — used to bend an image around a corner while keeping the correct camera geometry in the viewfinder — in place of a mirror."

Panavision Sees the Light

"In 1993, I was invited to talk at an imaging conference in Rochester, New York, where I showed a lot of the footage of what I was doing. By that time, all of the work I was doing on commercials and documentaries was shot with my 35mm single-swivel system, and the results I was getting were extraordinary. After the demonstration, I was approached by [ASC members] Victor Kemper and John Bailey, who were so impressed with my demonstration that they asked if they could borrow my tape and show it to Panavision. When I got back to Australia the next week, [Panavision president and CEO] John Farrand was on the telephone, and I started my association with the company."

Not long afterwards, Farrand and the firm's executive vice president of R&D/Optics, Iain Neil, met with Frazier to further discuss the design of a lens system based on the Australian's fully-functional 35mm prototype. "When we tested my prototype on a bench," Frazier recalls, "it actually did pretty well. And I'd put that system together purely by eyeball! I had none of the sophisticated test gear that tells you

whether a particular element is performing or not. And although my 35mm prototype only had one swivel, I'd already designed a second swivel and thought about putting in an image rotator. But with every bit of glass you add, you introduce a new set of problems. I knew that if I could get those further design elements together, we'd really have something that could benefit everyone."

Neil offers, "For 35mm film work, particularly feature films, you need extremely high-quality imaging if you're going to be intercutting with footage shot with prime lenses such as Primos. The Frazier lens system is equivalent to having maybe two or three zoom lenses in series. If a typical zoom lens has 20 elements, then this system is like having 60 lens elements one after another. Of

course, we don't actually have 60 elements in the Frazier lens, because we have components like mirrors and prisms, but if you add up what they mean optically, it's like having 60 elements.

"We basically took Jim's original design sketch and figured out the most efficient way of achieving all of the features, such as the dual swivel tip and image rotator. His original design sketch actually showed something that looked fairly similar to the final Frazier lens."

Depth of Field

When one first encounters the Frazier lens, the system's most striking feature is the extraordinary depth of field it can achieve. While this is by no means the system's only asset, it is an integral part of its design







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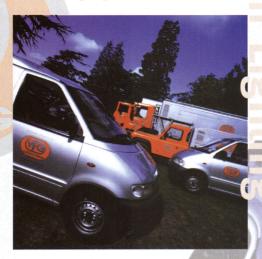
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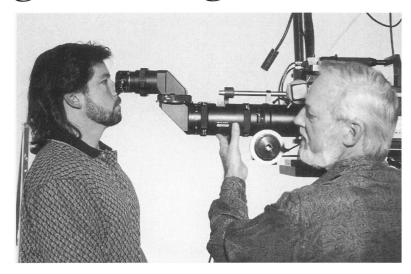


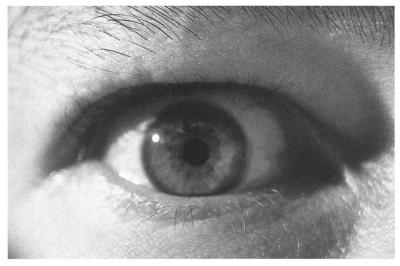
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Panavision's marketing and technical manager of commercials/ music videos. Dan Hammond, provides ocular assistance to Frazier in order to illustrate the system's extremely close, deepfocusing capabilities. **Bottom: The** resulting image (an actual 35mm film frame) taken by the Frazier lens. Although not clearly seen in this image, reflections of the surrounding room in Hammond's eve were also

razor-sharp.





and — given Frazier's initial purpose — the device's *raison d'être*.

Although this unusual lens seemingly defies the laws of physics, it actually achieves its expanded depth through natural means. "This device does have a very large depth of field, but it is not infinite," notes Neil. "The depth that is created does not break the laws of physics; it occurs because of the design of the optical relay system that is used. If you were to take a 10mm fixed-focal-length lens and put it on a camera, you'd get a certain field of view and depth of field at, say a T8 aperture. If you were to put the equivalent lens on the Frazier — which in this case would be the 14mm, which delivers about a 9.9mm field of view - you would

actually have a similar depth of field. Now you may say, 'Wait a minute! If that's so, why do people talk so much about the depth of field with this lens? Why wouldn't they just rent a 10mm instead?' The reason is that with a 10mm lens, the diameter of the front element is about six inches. If you were to take a bumblebee and put it on that lens's front glass, it would only fill about five percent of your frame. Because of the Frazier system's optical configuration, when you put the bumblebee on the front of the 14mm taking lens — which is about an inch and a half in diameter — the bee will fill about half of your frame. Yes, you'd have a large depth of field, but more importantly, you're able to get objects really close to the front of the taking lens to get into macro magnifications. So in a practical sense, the Frazier system's depth of field is more available and

"Another problem with other lenses has to do with the entrance pupil of the lens," Neil expands. "With a lens that has a six-inch diameter, the entrance pupil is actually some distance inside the lens. So as you bring your face in close to the lens, your nose will start to bulge and your ears do something weird with perspective distortion. With a smaller-diameter lens, the entrance pupil is still inside the lens, but at a much smaller distance [from the front]. If you look at the mathematics, it turns out that you could then bring someone's face all the way up to the lens and not see any perspective distortion. relationship has a lot to do with how the taking lenses, the field lenses and the system have been optimized, which in this case is in the area between six inches and three feet. When you can't see the perspective, you can't tell the size of an object or the distance it's at, so a sort of optical illusion is created."

Adds Frazier, "With the Frazier lens, macro work has never been easier. A cinematographer now has unparalleled freedom movement in the macro range. In fact, unlike conventional macro lenses, there is no pull-focus necessary. The camera can simply float in and out on the subjects without any loss of focus and without any distortion or curvature of field — even when the subject is almost touching the lens. This is particularly invaluable for scale model and tabletop work, where both depth and distortion are major issues. I knew from my commercial work that when you put a product close to the lens, you don't want to see this great curved field. I love playing with perspectives [and the perception of perspectives,] so I

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concentrated on building these units without any distortion. In my earlier prototype units, the illusion — which I knew was there — was ruined because of distortion. In commercials, clients usually don't like to see their products distorted. If the product has straight lines in it, they want to see it [photographed] with straight lines."

The Frazier Lens

After several years of design efforts and optical fine-tuning, the Frazier lens was made available to the cinematographic community. The system, based on Frazier's optical design, utilizes further optical refinements by Neil — who worked in conjunction with Frazier — and mechanics crafted by Rick Gelbard. It was designed to be extremely versatile and rugged, provide extreme levels of depth of field, and to mount on the front of a camera like any other lens.

In its finished form, the Frazier lens system features a dual swivel tip, an internal image rotator/de-rotator, and an in-line, drop-in, multiplefilter slot with an external thumb wheel for polarizer filters. Imaging is provided by a set of optimallychosen, modified still photography lenses which attach to the front of the Frazier's main tube. While there were initially seven taking lenses included with the system, Panavision has added four new focal lengths to this array (see table p. 90). All of the lenses are calibrated to deliver the system's currently widest T7 aperture.

Frazier, Neil and Gelbard were recognized for their efforts in 1998 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences with a Technical Achievement Award.

Taking Lenses

"One significant aspect of the Frazier lens which may not be obvious is that the taking lenses — which also house some field lenses — are designed as sealed units," Neil

submits. "With the Frazier taking lenses, you're actually getting a taking lens plus part of what really goes in the tube of the main system. In other systems, if you stop down to a T8 or T11, or all the way down to T32, you can have a major problem with dust. If there's one little particle near an intermediate image, you could end up seeing that speck on the film. But with a sealed taking unit, you can pretty much avoid dust. Of course, you still have to keep the optical instrument clean, but at least we have avoided the most likely cause of dust showing up on the final image."

The 11 taking lenses now offered with the Frazier system were selected for their excellent image quality and consistency following a survey of all available optics. It should be noted that the Frazier's internal relay optics reduce the focal length of the taking lenses, so the overall system delivers a wider field of view than marked by the respective lenses' manufacturers. Additionally, no focus or aperture adjustments are made on the taking lens itself; those functions are locked off. These adjustments are instead made at the rear of the main unit via controls located just behind the image rotator, and are standardized to accept all Panavision accessories.

Of the four new focal lengths recently added to the selection, one (a 14mm) is a shorter than the original set — delivering an even greater depth of field — while three others are longer (85mm, 105mm and 135mm). Notes Neil, "The longer focal lengths illustrate why increased depth of field, in itself, is not the only selling point of the Frazier lens system — it's a combination of features. situations where you may not want the object right up to the lens, but you still want the flexibility of the swivel tip, the image rotator and the larger depth of field, we've added the 85mm, a 105mm and a 135mm, which respectively deliver 60mm,

75mm and 95mm cine fields of view. These longer lenses still offer a large depth of field, but it will start at perhaps 2 to 4 feet and then go to infinity."

Swivel Tip

Perhaps the most useful aspect of the Frazier lens is its dual swiveltip design, which allows for unlimited 360-degree global orientation of the taking lenses. Simply put, the lens can be pointed in any direction, even back at the camera operator. The swivel tip incorporates heavy-duty bearings, which make the system extremely rugged and mechanically precise, and consists of two right-angle pivot points which can be turned independently and continuously in either direction. Internally, the image is relayed through the swivel via a mirror and an amici roof-edge prism. "On any piece of optics with a roof-edge," reveals Neil, "the roof has to be made very accurately. Otherwise, you can end up with a double image on the film. The roof angle should be 90 degree plus or minus three seconds of arc, which is very small. Normally, these types of prisms are used in binoculars and other types of instruments that are used by eye. And the eye is actually quite forgiving. In the case of the Frazier lens, however, the amici's roof-edge images to film, so it has to be very accurate."

Naturally, the Frazier's ability to swivel in any direction allows for a great deal of filmmaking flexibility. "There are obvious situations in tabletop work where it can be a difficult matter to even look through the viewfinder," relates Frazier. "But with the swivel tip, it's easy to leave the camera in a conventional setup and put the lens where you need it. Additionally, if you imagine the lens to be like your hand and arm, you can get the lens wherever you can put your hand. I've seen some extraordinary things done with the lens

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"You also have added freedom in that the camera itself doesn't have to be level," he adds. "For example, you can even get a level image if the camera is turned on its side under a car, simply by adjusting the image rotator. This system was designed to free up the difficult aspects of cinematography that are either too expensive or time-consuming. You don't want to have a jackhammer cutting holes in the floor to get a lens in a certain position. You can also save the costs of renting additional equipment like Panatates, dutch heads, low-angle prisms and hotheads. I have gotten reports back from other cinematographers that by using the Frazier lens, they've been able to literally chop days off their shooting schedules."

Image Rotator

The Frazier lens system is the first ever to offer an image rotator, which can be operated manually or by motor. Its ability to rotate the image a full 360 degrees or more both clockwise and counterclockwise — can be used in a number of ways, ranging from a simple dutch to a complex tabletop move that simulates aerial banks and yaws, or a dramatic crane shot. However, the device is also useful for various practical applications, such as leveling the camera on a hill without tweaking the tripod or dolly, or correcting the image orientation when the Frazier's head is swiveled.

"Rotating an image with a prism is not a new thing," Neil concedes, "but by putting that function in this system with its large depth of field and a fully adjustable swivel tip, you create a new range of options. The image rotator is actually what is called a pechan prism. A pechan prism is common in other optical instruments, but in this case it had to be made to very tight tolerances. One reason for that, of

course, is image quality, but another is that we have to keep the boresight constant. If you rotate the prism, you don't want the picture to spiral around too much."

Filter Slot

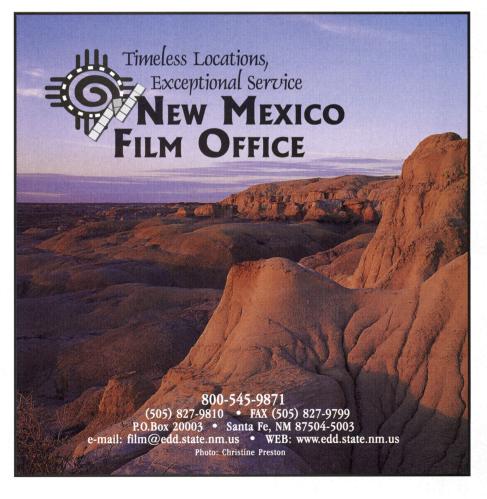
One feature that was added to Frazier's original prototype is an inline filter compartment that accepts standard 40.5mm glass filters. With a separate rotating filter holder, one can even externally adjust a polarizing filter.

"Every lens has to have some sort of filtering capability," states Neil. "However, if you put a filter in front of the Frazier's taking lens, you have to be careful about dust. I'm talking about things like tiny carpet filaments flying in the air that are attracted to the glass due to static charge. Therefore, with the Frazier lens, the best place to put a filter is inside the system, within the relay optics. The Frazier's filter slot is also a sealed unit — there are two glass windows inside to prevent dust from traveling up or down the tube — so you can have dust go into the filter compartment without producing spots on the film."

Into the Infinite

The Frazier lens system has become a popular device not only for tabletop work and commercials, but for music videos and features as well, including such films as Titanic, Small Soldiers, Mouse Hunt, Men in Black and Saving Private Ryan. And by covering the Super 35 aspect ratio, the system can be used for a wide range of film work. "Covering Super 35 was a main objective in our design," Neil expounds. "Since we presently don't have a true anamorphic version of the Frazier lens, we felt it was important for this lens to cover all of the regular spherical formats, including Super 35 and Academy. That way, if you're shooting an anamorphic film, you can extract the 2.40:1 frame from the



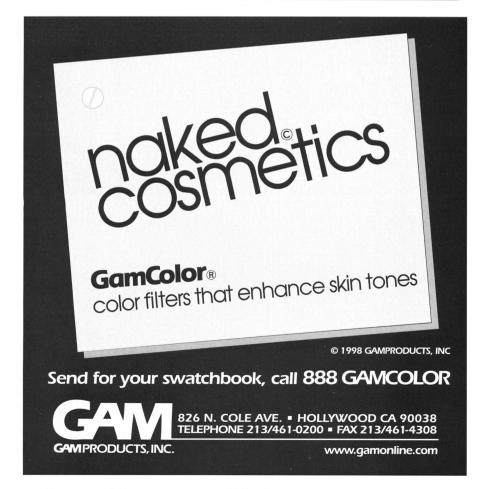




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film. However, the system doesn't completely cover full aperture.

"There is a good reason for not having the lens cover the full aperture," he expands. "For every little bit of extra image size that's required, you need a proportional increase in the size of the pechan and amici prisms. The pechan has a certain geometric ratio between the vertical, the horizontal and the thickness, so if you want to increase the image size by 20 percent, you're actually talking about increasing the prism's volume by 73 percent; which is close to doubling its size."

With the existing inventory and continued manufacture of more Frazier lens systems, Panavision can support an increasing number of customers who wish to rent the lens anywhere in the world. Additionally, Panavision and Frazier are making further enhancements to the system, beyond merely adding more lenses. The company is currently working on a motorized version of the lens which will control the pan and tilt of the swivel tip, operation of the image rotator (which will be interlocked with the swivel tip to provide imageorientation correction while swiveling), and focus and T-stop adjustments. Neil notes that this motion-control model should be available later this year. Frazier also reports that he is currently working on several significant enhancements to make his invention even more versatile and "address the needs of present and future cinematographers around the world and into the next millennia."

A version of this story will be available on the ASC Website featuring Quicktime movie clips demonstrating the capabilities of the Frazier Lens.

AC would like to thank Dan Hammond and Jim Roudebush of Panavision, Rosemary Pierson and Curt Cressman of Eastman Kodak, and Bud Stone, Beverly Wood and Paul Alcott of Deluxe Laboratories for their generous cooperation in completing this story.

Short Takes

A Mountainous Trek and Alien Illuminations

Off the Beaten Path by Stephanie Argy

Jeeps are no longer as spartan as their initial W.W. II-era models, but the recently broadcast "Mansion" spot certainly embraces the old-school ideal of the vehicle's legendary ruggedness. To illustrate the Jeep's combination of luxury and off-road capability, the clip's crew spent five days on a remote Canadian precipice to photograph the 4wheel-drive vehicle in a suitable environment.

The advertisement begins as a Jeep trundles up a series of tortuous mountain roads. Meanwhile, a gentleman in butler's garb stands outside an ornate mansion, checking his watch. After passing through some magnificent terrain, the Jeep finally arrives at the estate. The butler then unzips the side of the house, which turns out to be an enormous tent. "Welcome back, sir." he murmurs to the unseen driver as the Jeep makes it way inside. The camera pulls back, revealing that the car, butler and "mansion" are all situated atop an inaccessible mountain peak.

"Mansion" needed to maintain the high-concept tradition that the ongoing Jeep ad campaign had established over the years, while also introducing Chrysler-Daimler's newest model. Director/cinematographer Robert Gordon, who had done several previous Jeep spots, was contacted to helm this transitional spot. Over the years, he has worked on major campaigns for such name brands as Marlboro, Gatorade, Coca-Cola, and Coors.

Gordon first became involved with photography as a boy, when he began shooting stills. As a teenager, he shot documentary segments for news programs on a Miami TV station owned



by his father. Though he took time out to attend the University of Miami's law school, Gordon later returned to production, starting his own creative service company: "It was like an ad agency, but it didn't buy time — a hybrid outfit of the Nineties."

Around the same time, Gordon began working as a cinematographer and director. He soon won a large Heineken account, creating about 80 spots in three years while shooting in various locations around the world. He later became a co-founder of Flying Tiger Films (formerly GMS), and now shoots for about 100 days each year.

For the "Mansion" clip, Gordon and the agency executives brainstormed several thematic possibilities. Originally, the estate was supposed to be located in the middle of a dense forest. "My suggestion was to make it really spectacular by putting the house up in a really extreme place where you would never build anything," says Gordon.

The spot's other key element involved the only person seen on screen: the mysterious gentleman who "unzips" the side of the manor. Initially envisioned as a caretaker, he eventually evolved into the classic persona of a cutaway-suitclad butler with an English accent.

Once Gordon and the agency settled upon this concept, they had to find a woodland location that could convey a severe sense of isolation. "The problem became trying to find that extreme place, because of the time of the year when we were shooting," says Gordon. Though production was scheduled for early June, there was still a lot of snow on the ground above the tree line, exactly where Gordon wanted to shoot. "We rented a private plane and flew all over, looking at all of these mountaintop locations, but they were all snowed in." Ultimately, he found a location at a ski resort in western Canada.

The crew of "Mansion" huddles against the wind and cold while filming in the mountains outside of Banff in western Canada.

outside of Banff. Though some frost still covered the ground, Gordon was assured that the snow season was indeed over.

To get to the location, the 85-person crew drove about 45 minutes from their hotel to a helicopter pad, then took a minute-and-a-half long chopper ride to the top of the mountain. Ironically, even though the Jeep is portrayed as a hardy vehicle capable of handling the most demanding terrain, even the picture car had to be carried to the location by helicopter. On top of that, the 'copters that ferried crew and equipment were not powerful enough to lift the car, so the company had to bring in a giant commercial lifting helicopter.

"On the first day, the weather came in. We went to shoot, and the set was covered with about a foot of snow. Out came the shovels. It happened again the next day — we were constantly fighting the weather."

— director/ cinematographer Bob Gordon

Due to a sudden snowstorm, the five-day shoot proved difficult. "On the first day, the weather came in," Gordon recalls. "We went to shoot, and the set was covered with about a foot of snow. Out came the shovels. It happened again the next day — we were constantly fighting the weather."

Worse yet, powerful gusts of wind buffeted the location at speeds as high as 60 to 70 miles per hour. "The mansion set constantly had to be reconstructed, because it wasn't able to sustain the huge winds," the director/cameraman recalls.

Gordon shot "Mansion" with his own cameras, including an Arriflex 435, an Arri 35-III, and several Eyemos and Arri IICs. "We were generally shooting with three units," he recalls. To display

the landscape and its striking surroundings, he primarily deployed wide-angle lenses — especially a 10mm — and a Swing/Shift lens system.

Though "Mansion" is set late in the day, the production could not be confined to those few hours prior to dusk. "It was a major challenge to maintain a late-afternoon look while shooting throughout the day," says Gordon. "We had to shoot some things during midday. and we also did some day-for-night work. The difficult part was trying to make sure that everything matched. We were trying to maintain a consistency, because the period of time that the car was up on the mountain was obviously a very short amount of screen time." In a few situations, he underexposed the emulsion by one or two stops, but the overall consistency and latitude of Kodak's Vision stocks proved quite beneficial

Gordon also employed lens filtration to maintain visual continuity, including ND grads for the sky, and a Soft/FX 1 on wider vistas. Shots that required CG or effects work were shot clean to allow for control of diffusion or luminance in postproduction.

Though the mansion set's framework was built on the mountain — along with a bluescreen — much of the tent was created by In Sight Pix after the fact and composited by Sight Effects, two boutique visual effects houses located in Santa Monica, California. Live elements shot on location — such as the door flap being unzipped by the butler — were combined with computer-generated tent pieces. In particular, the house as a whole, which billows gently in the wind, was created using Alias software on Silicon Graphics workstations.

After the shoot wrapped, Sight Effects visual effects producer Jeff Blodgett and artists Chris Stevens, Phil Brennan, Scott Polen and David Neuberger spent four weeks of finessing the spot's imagery. The commercial ended up with about eight shots that featured the computer-generated house/tent, and another three or four on which Sight Effects did sky replacement and other enhancements

One of those improvements included color correction done with the Discreet Logic Flame. Alan Barnett, a visual effects supervisor at Sight Effects, notes that directors and agency execs rather than cinematographers — typically dictate the final look of most commercials. "Generally, the cinematographer will do a fundamental, as-closeas-possible color correction in telecine," he says. "Then things often get changed. At the end of the day, we do a fair amount of regrading." Fortunately, since he was both the director and cinematographer, Gordon remained present during the posting of the "Mansion" spot. "It ended up being a very collaborative process," says Barnett.

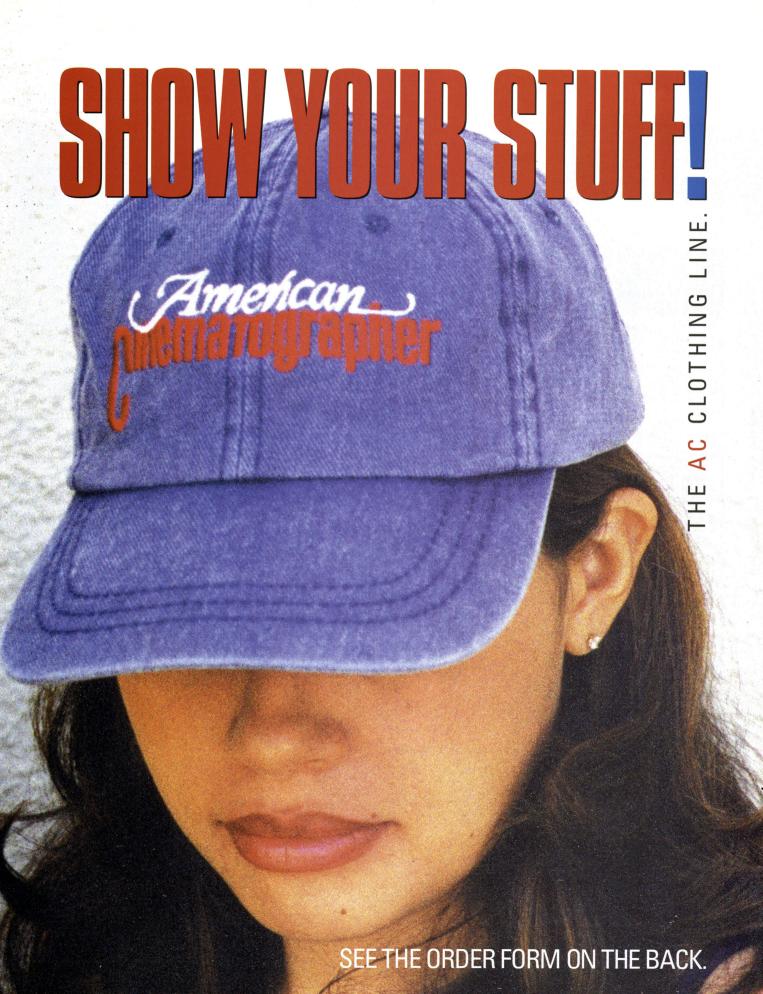
Gordon stresses that on a logistical undertaking such as the Jeep "Mansion" commercial, the ad's core concept is the most important aspect to keep in mind. "The primary consideration is that the vehicle becomes the hero and looks good throughout the spot."

Extraterrestrial Emanations by Stephanie Argy

When a cinematographer sets out to film a "spec spot" — a sample commercial done without any agency backing — the work often entails just as much toil an ordinary commercial shoot. The difference is that those challenges must be met on a tighter budget.

On director Joe Mandarino's recent Ray Ban sunglasses spec, cinematographer Danny Toback had to conceive an ingenious, low-budget means of creating a "close encounter" effect. In the spot, five people cruising through the desert at night are set upon by a UFO, which hovers over the car and dematerializes its passengers one by one. The only person who doesn't vanish happens to be sporting a pair of Ray Ban shades.

Although some of the effects would be achieved in postproduction, Toback wanted to do as much as he could on set — partly due to the limited funds, but mainly for philosophical reasons. He attests, "I'm a true believer



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that post is an important part of the process, but the more you can do on set, the more real everything becomes."

Though Toback and Mandarino had considered shooting the commercial on location, they ultimately opted for a Hollywood soundstage, which allowed for better environmental control. Crucial to the spot was the believability of the flying-saucer lighting effects. "We wanted something other than a 'white-light' space ship," says Toback, alluding to the tack often taken by filmmakers trying to deliver interstellar craft on a budget.

To create the illusion of a UFO floating over the car, Mandarino and his crew rigged a ring of 36 Par 64s to face downward directly above the picture car. He then sequenced the fixtures to generate a circular pattern of lights flashing on and off, thus creating a sense of the alien ship's shape and motion. The lamps were gelled with yellow, orange and dark orange hues to provide contrast with the blue nighttime-effect background, which was illuminated by heavily gelled 1Ks, 2Ks and zip lights.

Toback's next pressing concern was figuring out how to dematerializing the people positioned within the car. Shafts of light streaming down from the "spaceship" seemed to be the right approach, but the director wondered what type of lamp would best emit a powerful, well-defined beam. At one point. Toback considered deploying lights bounced into mirrors, but he rejected this idea as too complicated the soundstage had only a pipe grid lining the ceiling. He then thought of using airplane landing lights, but determined that such units weren't large enough to suggest an alien craft.

However, Xenon lamps — very bright arc lights originally designed in the Sixties for scientific research — do produce the type of beam Toback desired. Since a Xenon bulb is optimized to work in a horizontal position, though, these lamps cannot be pointed straight down; when a Xenon goes below 15 degrees under the horizon (and over about 30 to 35 degrees above), the light will start to flicker and become unstable.

But Toback discovered that Canadian company Everylite Technical Service, Ltd. had recently developed a Xenon lamp that *could* be aimed downwards. He wound up using five of them to create his beams, resulting in the Stateside debut of Everylite's Xenon fixture.

The lamps were designed by Everylite founder Chris Stigter, who worked in lighting-fixture repair before starting his own company. With the financial assistance of a grant from the Science Council of British Columbia, he spent several years refining his unique Xenon lamp in his basement. Stigter's device consists of one piece with no external ballast. This design makes

"The more you do on set, the more real everything becomes."

cinematographerDanny Toback

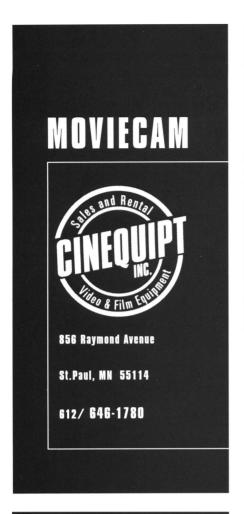
power transmission more efficient because the AC/DC conversion occurs in the lamp housing; traditionally, the conversion takes place in a separate ballast, with the power then conveyed over cables, resulting in a 20-percent drop in DC output for every 100' of cable.

The Everylite Xenon units utilized on the Ray Ban spot — dimmable from 4K to 2K — weigh about 100 pounds each: optional soundproofing adds 10 to 25 more pounds. Everylite offers other models ranging from 1K to 10K, all of which can also be dimmer-controlled. In addition, the fixtures are completely waterproof — an added plus when shooting in the rainy city of Vancouver.

The lamp's key components are its bulb (purchased by Everylite from Osram Sylvania Ltd.), reflector (another purchase item), and power supply (which is partly custom-made), which Everylite assembles into a package. According to Stigter, it's most important that a Xenon bulb be properly air-cooled (his invention meets Osram Sylvania specifications), and that the housing take into account the high pressure within the bulb itself.

The bulb is subject to such strong pressure that it could erupt with a





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concussive force equivalent to that of a small hand grenade. To prevent injuries. Stigter chose a very durable front lens. and made sure that the exhaust ports on top were angled backwards to prevent glass from exploding toward the front.

Toback photographed the Ray Ban commercial with a Panavision G2 mounted on a Technocrane, and utilized wider lenses — mainly a 14mm and 17mm — throughout the shoot. He employed Kodak's Vision 500T 5279 stock because of the spot's nocturnal setting, and also to achieve greater separation between the exposure and actual darkness. "With a slower stock and the same lighting. I would be shooting much closer to wide-open," he explains. By using a higher-speed emulsion such as 5279, on the other hand, he could "bring up more stop in the foreground, and let the background go blacker."

The cameraman also used a 1/2 black ProMist filter, which he describes as his default starting point. "Normal to me is a ½ black ProMist," he maintains.

Toback himself has an unusual perspective on the commercial industry, not merely because of his own career shooting spots. His father, Norm, was a cinematographer/director who worked primarily on humorous spots in the Sixties and Seventies, such as a famous Goodyear commercial featuring women in go-go boots stopping rolling tires with their feet to the tune of Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made for Walking." The younger Toback became a cinematographer by way of the lighting department, progressing through crew ranks from production assistant to grip, gaffer and director of photography. "I come from the master-apprentice school, and I spent a long time learning," he attests.

Toback's greatest career challenge had been to train himself to think as a cinematographer rather than a gaffer. "You look at things in a different way as a gaffer," he says. "You work from the background to the foreground." As a gaffer, Toback typically lit his scenes from the outside in. "I would light with my back to the set. A lot of times, I wouldn't even look through the camera

until I had set 15 lights. Now as a cinematographer. I only light what the camera sees through the lens."

In line with his personal philosophy of "rent less, own more," Toback has formed several companies over the years. While still a gaffer, he became a partner in DP Lighting (using his own first initial. D. and that of his partner. Pat O'Mara, as the firm's moniker). Toback recalls that the company's initial product was extension cords: "I sat down one Sunday and built 20 of them while watching football," he says. Now, he coowns Serious Film (with gaffer Ted Havash), a grip and electric company based in North Hollywood.

Over the course of his 22-year career. Toback has observed the commercial industry's greatest shift to be the widening gulf between low- and high-budget spots. Years ago, he says. "Eighty percent of the work was \$60,000 to \$100,000 commercials. They were the bread-and-butter of production companies and technicians." Nowadays, that middle ground is disappearing more and more. The other major change has, of course, been fueled by technology, such as improved film stocks and state-of-theart telecine machines. In the past, when post processes weren't as adept at disguising camera errors, cinematographers had to be able to identify and solve every potential pitfall of production. "Today, any film-school graduate with a sense of framing can give you a good image, because the technology is so good," he opines.

Since his days as a gaffer, Toback has learned to approach lighting in a different manner. He has also learned to allow his crew to make some of the decisions about the types of fixtures to use. "If I allow other people to contribute, it makes me better," he says.

Regardless of how much freedom he gives his crew, however, Toback knows that in the end, he is responsible for the final product. "I still have to say. 'We're ready,'" he concludes. "Ultimately, the director of photography is responsible for whatever image is on that film."

New Products

compiled by Michele Lowery and Andrew O. Thompson

Enhanced Dimension for The Prince of Egypt by Ron Magid

Beginning with Disney's Beauty and the Beast in 1991, the computer graphics revolution has had a significant impact on traditionally animated motion pictures. While CGI has produced imagery that would be nearly impossible to achieve with traditional techniques, the infusion of three-dimensional animation and parallax into a two-dimensional universe can be somewhat jarring to the viewer's eye. On the technical end, 3-D animation is much less forgiving than 2-D: animators are forced to work within the 3-D environment's parameters rather than being able to follow the dictates of drama. Essentially, animators needed a system that would enable them to compose and recompose shots like real cinematographers, then translate any camera moves from the characters to the backgrounds and vice-versa — in essence, a motion-control system for animation. DreamWorks SKG has devised just such a system — dubbed Exposure — for its animated Biblical epic The Prince of Egypt.

Previously, if animators wanted to incorporate three-dimensional CG imagery in animated films, the 3-D background elements — complete with camera moves — had to be created first. with the traditional animation choreographed through the environment afterwards. But DreamWorks co-founder Steven Spielberg didn't want the film's characters to be subservient to their surroundings, particularly in such key sequences as a breathless chariot race between Moses and Ramses through streets and around palaces. "Steven wanted a very active camera, one that was submerged in the environment, which is very difficult to achieve in 2-D



The two princes of Egypt, Ramses and Moses, race through the city on chariots with some added help from DreamWorks' new Exposure software, which facilitates 3-D perspective changes.

animation," explains The Prince of Egypt's scene-planning supervisor, Dave Morehead, "So we said, 'Okay, if we're going to do that, we want a full 3-D environment.' Now, the solution to that is to create a 'live-action set' in the computer. and put our characters in there, which is exactly what Steven specified. But up until now, that approach has been very limiting, because we couldn't change our camera moves after the fact. Suppose I put my 3-D chariot in this world, do a camera move around it and everything looks great. The animators, being who they are, probably decide that they will want a character to stand up and crack a whip halfway through the shot, which means that the character will go out of the top of the frame."

Before the introduction of Exposure, the animators would have been forced them to confine the character's actions to the background's boundaries. "Exposure allows us to go with 2-D animation first or 3-D animation first, depending on which should lead artistically," says Morehead. "In the chariot race, we wanted the 2-D horses to seem as if they were pulling the 3-D chariot, so the 2-D animator would start off by drawing a rough horse and a rough char-

iot. We'd format those drawings so that the 3-D animators could work with them in that environment. Then, we'd plot out the chariot's movement, relative to the horse drawing, and the 2-D artists would go in and draw the driver. At the same time — because Exposure allows us to simultaneously maintain both sets of data discretely and choreograph them separately — we always maintained the possibility that we could change the camera move or the animation, within reason, throughout the process."

Exposure is the latest in a long line of software camera packages designed to bridge the 2-D and 3-D realms. Previous incarnations never quite addressed all of the problems faced by animators moving between the dimensions. "I've worked on three other systems that tried to solve this problem, but we never went the whole hog," Morehead admits. "We tried just to bite off little plug-ins in Alias, and an interpreter for the 2-D package we were working on. This time, we said 'To hell with it,' and decided to build a fully integrated package to allow the animation scene-planners to work a little bit more like live-action directors of photography. We're essentially the cinematographers,

Notes The Prince of Eavpt's sceneplanning supervisor, Dave Morehead, "In the chariot race. we wanted the 2-D horses to seem as if they were pulling the 3-D chariot, so the 2-D animator would start off by drawing a rough horse and a rough chariot. Then we'd format those drawings so that the 3-D animators could work with them in that environment.'



and it's our primary responsibility to handle the integration between all of the 2-D and 3-D elements. Up until now, the choreography of those 3-D and 2-D worlds has been kind of difficult. 3-D packages like Alias and Softlmage are great for working in 3-D environments, but they don't really lend themselves to the flat 2-D world. What we wanted was a tool that would combine the strengths of both worlds, and allow us to conveniently choreograph all of these 2-D and 3-D elements in one interface.

"Now, if we want to animate Moses sitting in a chariot, we can animate Moses and then use Exposure to bring that into [Cambridge Animation Systems'] Animo — our 2-D animation package — along with an Alias wire file of the chariot. We then choreograph them both and put a camera move around them. That way, the two individual packages are doing what they do best — Alias deals with 3-D objects, and Animo does all of the 2-D work. Thanks to Exposure, the traditional animators could get the 3-D elements from Alias onto paper, and the Alias animators could have all of the drawings in the shot in the 3-D world. Exposure started off as a choreography tool, but turned into a sort of 'translator.' And it's not just a onetime translation — it's an ongoing communication between the 3-D, 2-D digital and paper worlds, which allows us to pull in the best features that each

component has to offer. But we don't actually composite the elements in Exposure — instead, it acts as the choreography tool, sending instructions back to the individual packages as to where to put the cameras and how to move each object in the scene so they all lock together. Then the compositing of all the elements is done in Animo."

With Exposure, the virtual camera rotates around the 3-D chariots as it's also rotating at the same speed around the "billboards." flat cutouts of the characters in the chariots over which the artists animate. "Through Exposure, we can assign behaviors to the billboards that the characters are on." Morehead reveals. "Before, when we'd do all of the 3-D elements first, and then animate the character to it, we'd have to re-draw the character in a different position every time that 3-D object moved. But in Exposure, we have all the common 3-D properties, like being able to 'parent' one object to another object, which means that we can actually put a billboard inside a chariot and parent it, so when we move the chariot around, the billboard goes with it. That way, the character doesn't have to be animated every time the camera moves, which is a distinct advantage."

"Then, we lock a 'plot camera' to the billboard to print out each frame of the chariot on 11" by 17" paper, translating the perspective of the 3-D object onto the billboard itself. For example, that gives us a full 360-degree move around a chariot in 3-D; when that's plotted out, the character animator sees the chariot revolving completely and can actually animate that revolve to his character," adds Morehead. "Then we'll take their drawings and scan those back into the computer."

Animators can also employ this technique to create the illusion of growing size as a character rides from the distance into close-up. "Most of the animation is not really done in perspective, per se," Morehead says. "For a scene of the chariot flying down the street, the animator might be looking at the chariot from the same perspective the whole time. We can use the plot camera to extract out all the translation movement, rather than drawing the character small when he's far away and large when he gets closer. That way, the chariot pretty much stays the same size and the animators animate a constant-size image. It's a significant advantage — not iust in look, but cost as well — because we don't have to re-animate that character every time the chariot moves."

But if this powerful tool primarily handles choreography of the 2-D and 3-D elements, why the name Exposure, which conjures images of a lighting tool? "It does everything but the lighting," concedes Morehead. "We didn't actually pick the name, the developers picked it. To me, it doesn't matter what you call it, except that people are always asking me, 'Oh, now show me the Exposure portion,' and I have to explain, 'Well, it does choreography.'"

Although Exposure does not affect the lighting of a 3-D scene, it has enabled real-world background painters to translate their 2-D work into 3-D, with remarkable results. "After we've built a 3-D set, we'll print a specific angle out, which becomes a template that the background painter physically paints using oils," Morehead says. "Then we scan the painting and project that image onto the 3-D geometry. The Exposure tool extends the painting into the room and gives us parallax on all the objects. Therefore, what we got when we rendered the

images were actual paintings in 3-D. instead of 3-D lighting. We used very little 3-D lighting in rendering."

As with a masterful painting, DreamWorks' artists relied on different shades to convey the sense of lighting. Despite the fact that no computer can guite match the rich patina of oil paints. Exposure enabled animators to place their characters in totally hand-painted 3-D landscapes. The end result is that *The* Prince of Egypt resembles a canvas in motion. "These backgrounds are literal paintings, and the same background artist also painted whatever 3-D props and objects are in the shot," claims Morehead. "I know that other companies care trying to develop a system that allows artists to paint directly on the computer, but artists will always want to use real paints. We wanted to make sure that our background artists — who are trained in oils and have painted that way for 20 years — could contribute significantly to the look of the film."

Best of all, The Prince of Egypt's spectacular visuals are merely the "tip of the proverbial pyramid" in terms of what Exposure can deliver to the screen. "Many of the scenes in The Prince of Egypt were started before we had a working version of Exposure," says Morehead, "A lot of the software was rapidly prototyped, so we kept going back in and ironing out problems. We're still working on it even today, making things quicker and cooler. But it's done everything we'd hoped it could do and more. We used Exposure for 178 shots in The Prince of Egypt. So far, our next animated feature, El Dorado, has somewhere around 350 Exposure shots, and we're only about halfway through the production."

This new technology may have even greater resonance in the domain of live-action moviemaking. "Anybody who is faced with integrating 3-D CG into their film is going to have exactly the same problems that we encounter." opines Morehead. "I suspect that in the very near future, live-action directors are going to be using tools very similar to Exposure to integrate 3-D and liveaction, so look for a tool like this on your shelf in the next couple years."



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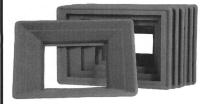


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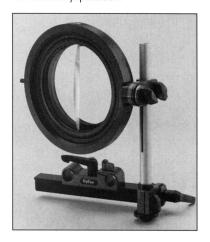


Latest in Lens Conversion

Century Precision Optics introduces the new Series 2000 Century/Canon 17-35mm T3 lens conversion, which is intended for such lightweight cameras as the Aaton 35, Moviecam SL and Arriflex 435. Century has re-engineered Canon's EOS still

35mm lens from the inside out. The result is a 35mm cine zoom that holds focus and minimizes image movement throughout the zoom range. The unit also incorporates a new aluminum alloy housing that makes conventional zooming possible and minimizes lens weight (only 31 ounces). Lens markings are large, bright, and clearly readable from both sides. Features include internal-focus design, PL mount, integral gears, and series-9 front threads.

Century Precision Optics, (818) 766-3715, fax (818) 505-9865, website: www.centuryoptics.com



Diopter Holder

OpTex unveils its138mm diameter Diopter/Split Diopter holder specifically designed for use with lightweight broadcast cameras, and Super 16, 16mm or 35mm motion picture cameras. The supplied bracket allows the user to adjust the holder's height and lateral position. Three hundred and sixty degree rotation is also possible, and the holder can be swung away should there be a need for a lens change. The holder is supported by either lightweight support bars or 15mm/19mm bars via the appropriate adapter bracketry.

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Socket Speed Rings

Chimera has re-designed its medium (9750-9750ALE) and mogul (9760-9760ALE) screw socket speed rings. The new ring (9830 US plug, 9840 Euro plug) has a mogul screw base and is



also supplied with the medium (standard household) base. This set up allows for usage of any standard incandescent photoflood bulb up to 500 watts, or a mogul base bulb of up to 1500 watts. The lightweight Manfrotto adapter also allows for the rotation of the Lightbank or Lantern.

Chimera, (888) 444-1812, website: www.chimeralighting.com.



Steadicam Harness

Daniel Sauvé Designs introduces the DSD Generation 1 Harness, a backmounted Steadicam system harness. Each vest is custom-tailored and built by hand. A molded carbon-fiber plate fits to the operator's back and is encased in a leather harness. The vest acts as a wide belt around the abdomen, and the back plate ensures system support and rigidity. The operator's chest is free; comfortable shoulder straps allow support and adjustment to the top part of the vest.

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sweet spot. Although now mounted in the back, the arm's fulcrum point remains at exactly the same position as the original design. The connecting bracket of the arm is in a straight angle (as opposed to a 60-degree angle to connect on the stomach). This design is intended to allow for better use of the side-to-side arm movements, as well as eliminate any knocking from the connector to the arm's body.

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Kimsa Carry, (212) 727-1922, fax (212) 414-4427, e-mail: kimsacarry@ aol.com.



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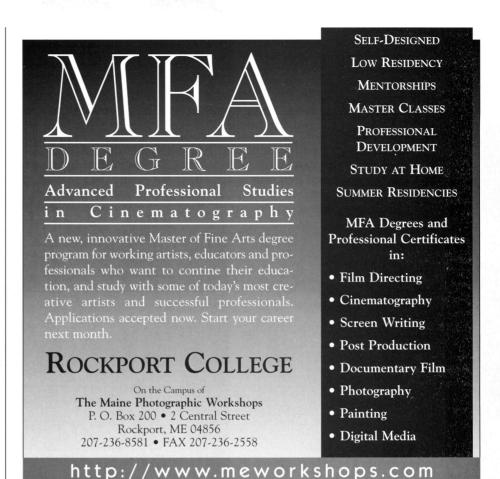
with Cool-Lux's recently introduced Cool-Brick — a replacement for the Anton-Bauer battery pack. The Delta Force can also be utilized for any NiMH or NiCd system — from low-capacity, compact batteries to high-capacity 10Ah power belts. The Delta Force can sense the voltage and capacity of every cell, will not allow cells to generate heat through loss of electrolytes, and can charge a brick or belt in two hours without a temperature increase. The Delta Force measures 6" long x 2½" wide x 1½" high, weighs only 4 ounces, and has an output charge rating of 2.2A. The charger is internally dual voltage regulated, allowing for automatic, convenient overseas adaptability. An auto-charge completion indicator also prevents overcharging, and LED indicators let the user know the status of the charge at all times.

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Getting Graphic

Cutting Edge Technology, Inc. (CETI) introduces the ProStation GS 400D and ProAlpha GS 667, two new high-end workstations for CAD/CAM/CAE, Architecture/Engineering/Construction (AEC), plant design, visual simulation, image rendering, 3-D animation and other professional graphics applications. The ProStation GS 400D features a dual Intel Pentium II 400 MHz processor, while the ProAlpha GS 667 is powered by a Compaq Alpha 667MHz processor both utilize the Microsoft Windows NT operating system. The two new workstations are available in a vintage "hunter green" full or mid-tower chassis. Maxgraphix 3-D OpebGL graphics accelerators support the latest Intel/Alpha processors. The graphics accelerator features 96 MB of memory (16 MB VRAM frame-buffer and 80 MB of DRAM local buffer) and supports 32-bit true color (double buffer resolution of 1,920 x 1,080 pixels at all resolutions.) It also provides 3.3 million 25-pixel polygons per second, 3.0 million 3-D vectors per second and up to 66 million MIPS-mapped pixels per second with 32-bit Z-buffering.

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mented by CETI storage engineering improvements. The workstations are compatible with most of the industry's leading graphics software programs, including Alias/Wavefront Maya, Softimage 3-D, Lightwave 3-D, Lightscape, Kinetix, Microstation, Solidworks, EDS Unigraphics, Pro/MECHANICA, Ansys, Pro/Engineer. Artisan. AutoCad. GameGen II, 3D Studio Max R2x and many others. Both the ProStation GS 400D and ProAlpha GS 667 are covered under a three-year parts and labor warranty. CETI also offers a service policy that provides 8-to-24 hour system turnarounds. The ProStation GS and ProAlpha GS comprise an entire series of workstations that can be custom-configured for the digital content artist. CETI is a "build-to-order" manufacturer, equipped for small or large orders at its ISO 9002-certified assembly plant.

CETI, (800) 722-7748, website: www.ceti.com.

New HDTV Equipment

Evertz Microsystems announces the introduction of its 9000-series plat-

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form for the HDTV and DTV products. The Evertz 9000 series platform has been designed specifically for the SDTI and HDTV applications. The Evertz HDTV DAs feature a 1RU frame that houses 3 DA cards that each have one input and four outputs. The HD9501-DA features autoequalization for all serial data rates up to 1.5Gb/s (inclusive of 540mb/s, 360mb/s, 270mb/s, 177mb/s, 143mb/s), 150 meters at 1.5Gb/s (Belden 1694 cable or equivalent, <100ps of jitter).

Evertz has also introduced the HD9570 HDTV Ancillary Data Encoder and HD9590 HDTV Graticule Generator. The Ancillary Data Encoder provides a solution for high bit rate data handling requirements such as closed captioning, source ID, timecode, VITC and other METADATA application requirements for HDTV. The Graticule Generator is a multiformat graticule that keys various alignment markers over a source video picture to facilitate film transfers, postproduction and quality-control measures relating to picture location for various film aspect ratios, safe action and title areas as well as picture center. The HD9590 also supports a Windows 95 utility for PCbased remote control, setup and configuration management.

Evertz also introduces the 5550 UV Universal Film Reader/Decoder, which can handle all major film formats and all codes presently in use with just one head and a separate 1RU decoder unit. This simplifies telecine bay operation by having a complete solution in one system while providing a scaleable purchase and upgrade path. The 5550 can be mounted on a telecine or other film transport to recover KeyKode, Arri code and Aaton code from 16mm, Super 16 or 35mm film. The Reader/Decoder unit features automatic intensity control and also incorporates the latest technology that provided advanced digital processing for the recovery of code from film with noise and other unwanted artifacts. It is also a reader for data mode transfers for the non-real-time transfers.

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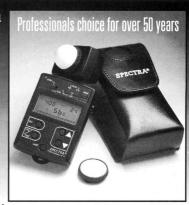
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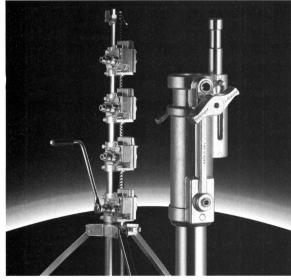


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Points East

New York, New York: Big-City Dreams

by Eric Rudolph

The days when top-tier features could use the outdated architecture of studio backlots or compressed, long-lens shots of Toronto's spotless, spacious streets to stand-in for the megalopolis known as New York City are becoming passé. Today's audiences and leading filmmakers demand more authenticity, which is why the Big Apple is in enjoying a moviemaking boom. (See Points East, AC April '98.)

However, it's becoming more complicated to secure prime Manhattan locations, given the increasing demand for film permits to shoot on New York's often constricted streets. Hollywood features, TV productions, foreign projects and indie flicks are all vying for shooting space. And for many Gotham residents, it's no longer fun to have Tinseltown in the back yard.

"A few years ago I felt as if I owned the city," says New York-based location manager Christian Von Tippelskirch, a screenwriter who produced the indie feature *Three Below Zero*. "Now, with the increases in overall traffic and film production, it is much more difficult to secure prime New York City locations."

"In recent years, there has been a 20 percent increase in overall vehicle traffic in New York City, as well as a great upsurge in tourism," asserts Julianne Cho, the director of special events and publicity for the Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting, which issues permits for crews to shoot on city streets. "And we are also in our fourth straight record-breaking year of film production here. However, there has not been a significant rise in the number

of complaints from residents about film crews."

Cho goes on to explain that certain neighborhoods — including Greenwhich Village and the Upper West Side — are periodically "cooled off, based on a complex review of the number of permits issued and the realistic impact of filming there." The length of the cooling-off period varies, but its purpose, says Cho, is to "preserve the sites for future filming. We work very hard, as do the location managers, to find alternative locations to areas that are temporarily unavailable." Von Tippelskirch also agrees that cooling-off periods aid in location preservation.

When a A-level features need an dense urban environment for a picture set in New York or another East Coast city, many now turn to the city's outer boroughs — Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx — which are huge, spacious. underpopulated compared to Manhattan, "I always look to the outer boroughs for locations, as do most of my colleagues, because filming is usually easier there than in Manhattan," says Von Tippelskirch. In Sleepers (AC Oct. '96), for example, Brooklyn stood in for Manhattan during some extensive scenes set in downtown's rough Hell's Kitchen district.

Recently, Random Hearts, a Rastar/Mirage production for Sony Pictures that's being directed by Sydney Pollack, invaded the quiet, officially-designated Historic District of Jackson Heights, Queens. The filmmakers sought to capture a drive-by shooting scene involving high-profile actors — box-office titan Harrison Ford and Academy







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Award nominee Kristin Scott Thomas.

"The majority of the story takes place in Washington, D.C.," states Von Tippelskirch, who is working as location manager of Random Hearts. "We had decided that a Manhattan building near the Queensboro bridge would stand in for a D.C. apartment building, but we quickly realized that closing off the streets there for several days would have been next to impossible. (Residents of the area - located on the fringe of the wealthy Upper East Side — nearly had their staffs of retainers storm City Hall when the change in the bridge's traffic patterns led to a upswing in hornhonking, bottleneck conditions.)

Filming the scenes in Washington, D.C. would have been too costly because the entire crew was New York-based. Von Tippelskirch and his scouts determined that this residential section of Jackson Heights — with its lower population density, quiet, wide streets and endless blocks of brick apartment buildings — would be an excellent stand-in for the nation's capital.

Fortunately for the production, Jackson Heights has seen very little major filmmaking activity, and so the residents welcomed the *Random Hearts* team with mostly open arms. (Woody Allen was reported to have been filming in Jackson Heights at the very same time, but the director's penchant for secrecy led to a "no comment" response after several attempts to confirm this rumor with his representatives.)

Helping to ease the situation were Von Tippelskirch's community outreach efforts, which he now finds to be more necessary than ever. "We put out leaflets two days in advance explaining what the film was and who was in it, and that parking would be usurped," he says. "I met with the community board, local officials and even the deputy mayor of Queens. Thankfully, they were happy that we were coming."

Indeed, the residents actually appeared to be pleased that a small army's worth of rolling stock was about to descend upon them. "My parking PAs,

whose job is to block off the street parking and sit there overnight to hold space for our trucks, were offered coffee and food by the neighbors late at night," recalls Von Tippelskirch. "Harrison Ford's willingness to cooperate was also a major plus. A class of schoolchildren came with video cameras to make a documentary about our work, and Mr. Ford and Sydney Pollack gave them interviews. It was a neighborhood [feeling] happening — we didn't have a single complaint."

Random Hearts didn't stop with Jackson Heights. Nearby, the engagingly chaotic Steinway street shopping area filled in for a D.C. avenue; an alley in Brooklyn's booming Greenpoint section doubled as a Capitol setting; and Brooklyn's Prospect Park served as a setting for scenes set in New Hampshire.

"With the increases in overall traffic and film production, it is much more difficult to secure prime New York City locations."

location managerChristian Von Tippelskirch

During filming of *The Godfather* Part II, director Francis Coppola had an entire city block in the Lower East Side transformed into a turn-of-the century Italian-American ghetto. This effort was remarkable in that most residents were not displaced, even though street paving was ripped from its foundation and authentic-looking price tags were placed on period items in a block's worth of specially-dressed shop windows. When asked if the city's current, slightly tense location filmmaking climate would ever again allow such momentous "setdressing," Von Tippelskirch replies with a sigh, "I don't know if that sort of complete takeover is possible today, but I would love to see that kind of largescale dramatic filmmaking flourish in the city again. New York has such great backdrops for dramatic storytelling of all types."

Books in Review

by George Turner

The St. James Film Directors Encyclopedia

Edited by Andrew Sarris Visible Ink Press, 892 pps., hardback, \$29.95 ISBN 1-57857-028-0

Since Andrew Sarris is the man who popularized the auteur theory, an idea which didn't set well with those of us who cherish the concept of cinema as a collaborative art, I approached this hefty tome with some trepidation. After reading Sarris's introduction, however, I modified my attitude considerably. "No, I am not now and have never been an unmodulated and uninflected auteurist." he comments. "I insisted from the beginning of my discourses that directorial auteurism was the first step rather than last stop of film scholarship." The critic goes on to explain that his writings were misinterpreted "maliciously distorted." So it goes for those who dare to put their thoughts in print.

For this encyclopedia, Sarris selected more than 200 directors to scrutinize, bringing together more than 100 writers to provide essays about them. The chosen subjects stem from the ranks of the legendary, the contemporary and the up-and-coming. The variety of writers is nearly as diverse, consisting of the down-to-earth, the up-in-the-air and those with personal agendas to pursue, some of the latter find hidden meanings that might be news to the ladies and gents being written about. In most cases, however, the focus is upon filmmaking themes, influences and techniques.

The excellent filmographies found here list of all directorial credits, as well as each artist's work in other disciplines such as cinematography, writing, editing and acting. Select photos accompany

each entry.

Getting back to Sarris's introduction, here's another line that struck a poignant chord: "Undeniably, many people will at least be partially unhappy with our choices, and why shouldn't they be when we are not entirely happy ourselves?"

Of Gods and Monsters

by John T. Soister McFarland, 405 pps., casebound, \$65 ISBN 0-7864 0454-X

John Soister will no doubt trample the toes of some fellow horror-movie fans in this ambitious look at Universal Studio's much-loved classic genre films. The author offers guite a number of wellaimed kicks at some sacred cows: "Tod (rhymes with clod) Browning"; "[Dwight] Frye's inadequacy"; and the "simpleminded absurdities" of Murders in the Rue Morgue. Soister has every right to his opinion, which he expresses while presenting a lot of interesting material. However, his rollicking prose style is sometimes ill-suited to the material, and he makes a few factual errors as well. such as the statement that Mystery of Life was never even made. The picture was released at 73 minutes on August 3, 1931, although many theaters refused to book the film because it espoused Darwin's theory of evolution — oh, horror of horrors!

But enough grousing; here's the good news. While almost every film historian in captivity has written ad nauseam about most of Universal's allout horror pictures, Soister ventures into less familiar territory. He covers such pre-Dracula gems as The Last Warning, The Charlatan, The Last Performance, The



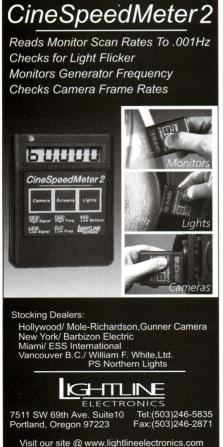
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Cat Creeps and La voluntad del muerto in an expansive style that these pictures richly deserve. Along the way, he also devotes attention to some neglected shows of the Carl Laemmle era, including Secret of the Blue Room, The Love Captive, Remember Last Night? and Mystery of Edwin Drood. Also, welcome material abounds on a dozen not-quitehorror pictures made during the 1936-38 European ban on fright flicks, including the half-dozen Crime Club mysteries. The main text winds up with the two epic chillers responsible for the genre's 1939 rebirth: Son of Frankenstein and Tower of London.

A savory bit of icing is offered up in the appendices: a report on the six *Shadow Detective* two-reelers of 1931-32 and the New York-made *The Radio Murder Mystery* shorts of 1933.

The Poe Cinema

by Don G. Smith McFarland, 352 pps., casebound, \$55 ISBN 0-7864-0453-1

Many movies have been based upon the macabre tales of 19th-century American author/poet Edgar Allan Poe, and the attribute most common to these adaptations is the slight resemblance they bear to the original texts. But some notable exceptions do figure in this critical filmography. Smith records 81 pictures from 13 countries that were adapted from Poe's works between 1908 (Sherlock Holmes in the Great Murder Mystery) and 1992 (Tale of a Vampire). In each case, he lists vital statistics along with a synopsis and critique; in most instances, both essays are impressively detailed, but some that are understandably brief when dealing with films no longer available for study. (The author is refreshingly frank in noting those pictures he has been unable to see.)

Although Smith is good at acknowledging his sources of information, those which he has utilized are not always reliable. Thus, the 1932 version of *Unhelmliche Geschichten* "sees Richard Oswald remake his 1913 version of the same title as a comedy." The seed

of that idea is based on the *Overlook Film Encyclopedia*'s statement that the picture "pokes fun at the classic motives of the genre." Having personally seen the film, however, I can attest that it is unremittingly grim. Also for the record: *The Ghost Breakers* is not "a remake of *The Cat and the Canary,"* and the 1953 TV drama *Heartbeat* is not the version of *The Telltale Heart* that William Cameron Menzies directed, which was actually made under Poe's title in 1949.

Most of the pictures examined in this tome are admirable in their detail, especially the Epstein version of *La Chute de la Maison Usher*, several Universal adaptations of the early Thirties, Dwain Esper's notorious *Maniac*, MGM's fine two-reel version of *The Telltale Heart*, the Roger Corman productions of several Poe titles, and some of the lesser-known independent and foreign films.

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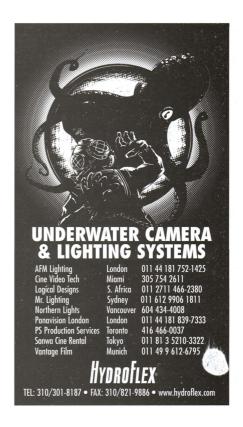
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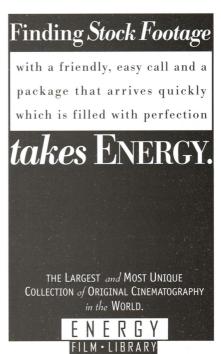
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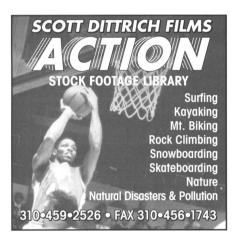




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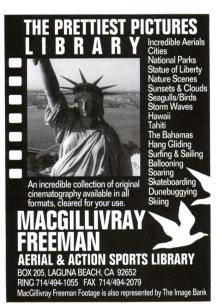
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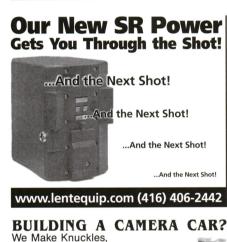
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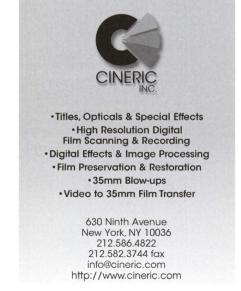
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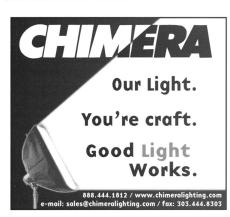


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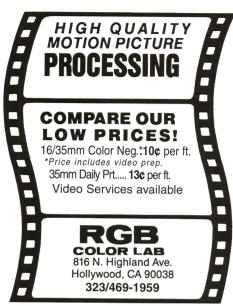
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Peter Deming was born in Beirut, Lebanon, where he was raised for a short time before his family relocated to Morocco, the Philippines, and Wisconsin, successively. His interest in cinema began during childhood when he made Super 8 films with his older brother, Charlie. After doing undergraduate work at the University of Wisconsin, Deming moved to Los Angeles to attend the American Film Institute. There, he studied with George Folsey Sr., and eventually received an MFA in cinematography. In the early days of his career, Deming worked as loader, second and first

camera assistant, and operator in the production of industrial and educational films. Deming's feature film credits as a director of photography include the cult favorite Evil Dead II, Hollywood Shuffle, House Party (winner of the Best Cinematography award at the 1990 Sundance Film Festival), My Cousin Vinny, S.F.W., Joe's Apartment, Lost Highway (see AC March '97), Austin Powers, Scream 2, Mystery, Alaska and 50 Violins. His TV credits include On the Air, Hotel Room and Cosmic Slop.

New York native **Ron Fortunato** earned a BFA in Film and Theater Studies from the State University of New York at



Purchase. He later moved to Europe, where he spent six years living in Italy and Germany. There, he served as a first assistant cameraman on some 14 feature films, and photographed four motion pictures in Germany before returning to New York City. In the late Eighties, Fortunato spent a few years shooting commercials and music videos before sequeing into the domestic feature film arena. Fortunato's feature credits include Jersey Girls, Fathers and Sons, Mac, If Lucy Fell, Basquiat, Nil by Mouth (a Camerlmage '98 Silver Frog winner; see Points East, AC Nov. '97) and One Tough Cop.

In Memoriam

Joseph C. Brun, ASC, a distinguished French-American cinematographer and an ASC member for 49 years, passed away in Florida on November 13, 1998. He was 91

Brun was born on April 21, 1907 in Paris. There, he received the Diplome de l'Institute d'Optique, a degree that in America would correspond to an MA in Optics. "From 1933 to 1935, I was in charge of teaching optics to students of the École Technique du Cinema, the French state school for motion pictures," the cameraman said in 1949, upon receiving ASC membership. "I started as an assistant cameraman at the Paramount Studios at Joinville, France, and I assisted most of the cameramen there, among whom were Phil Tannura [ASC], Harry Stradling [Sr., ASC], John Alton and Osmond Boradaille." Paramount founded this wing to produce foreign-language versions of the studio's Hollywood pictures with European casts and directors. From 1934 to 1937, Brun operated for leading French, Russian and German cinematographers on such features as Les Miserables, Les nuits de St. Petersburg, L'escadrille de la chance, Troika, L'or des mers, and numerous others.

Graduating to director of photography in 1937, Brun specialized briefly in short subjects and directed *Balears* under his real name, Joseph Braun. He soon was filming features for some of the great names in European cinema, including Pierre Weill (*L'affaire Anglade*), Jean Epstein (*L'ile des brumes*) and Alexander Kirsanoff (*La nuit est vide*).

In 1944, Brun was in put charge of training cameramen in Ottowa for the Canadian Army Film Unit at the National Film Board. After the war, he settled in Forest Hills, New York, and became a member of IATSE Local 6644.

Upon the recommendation of Stradling and Tannura, Brun joined the American Society of Cinematographers in 1949, a mere two years after he had become a naturalized U.S. citizen. Even then, much of Brun's work was executed in far-flung locales, including the two Cinerama productions *Cinerama Holiday* and *Windjammer* for Louis de Rochemont, African expedition photography for RKO's *Savage Splendor*, African

location work for Howard Hawks' *Hatari*, and three features filmed in France, including Marcel Pagnol's *Marius*. Brun's work on de Rochemont's spy story *The House on 92nd Street* set a precedent for many similarly styled productions.

In 1953, Brun earned an Academy Award nomination for his cinematography in *Martin Luther*. Other films he listed among his favorites include *Winds Across the Everglades, Edge of the City, Odds Against Tomorrow, Middle of the Night, Walk East on Beacon* and *The Whistle at Eaton Falls*.

Upon retiring, Brun and his family moved to Boca Raton, Florida. In 1993, he summed up his career in a few words: "I have had more than 35 years as a cinematographer and experience in every type of film project all over the world. I've made feature movies, documentaries and TV commercials."

Services for Brun were held on November 15, 1998, in Florida. He is survived by his wife, Shirlee; two daughters, Myriam Chapman and Irene Bowers; seven grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

WRAP SHOT



Above: General **George Patton** (George C. Scott) surveys the battlefield as his First Army lies in wait for advancing German tanks and troops. Right: Director of photography Fred J. Koenekamp, ASC lines up a lowangle shot with one of his **Dimension 150** cameras. The cinematographer earned an **Academy Award** nomination for his outstanding

In 1970, while America was figuratively and spiritually bogged down in the quagmire of the Vietnam War, 20th Century Fox released Patton, a stunning, in-depth portrait of the most controversial and successful Allied commander of World War II. Directed by Franklin Schafner and photographed by Fred J. Koenekamp, ASC, the picture is truly epic in scope, thanks to bravura location work (done on 71 sites in six countries), the director of photography's dramatic images (which were achieved with the Dimension 150 widescreen system), and George C. Scott's stunning performance as a warrior destined for greatness despite his personal failings.

A photographic and projection system created by Dr. Richard Vetter and Carl W. Williams at UCLA, Dimension 150 offered optics that covered a 150-degree field of view, which closely approximates the normal peripheral vision of the human eye. The system offered a complete range of lenses, which were adaptable to Todd AO/Mitchell 65mm cameras. The resulting footage was projected onto a deeply curved screen, creating a virtually distortion-free picture. For projection in normal theaters, the D-150 footage could be adapted for any standard theatrical

format, including normal 35mm, CinemaScope and conventional 70mm.

Roughly 80 percent of *Patton* was filmed on natural locations, ranging from the general's actual wartime headquarters in Knutsford, England, to the Pamplona region of Basque Spain and

Calori, Chuck Arnold and Mike Benson
— all of whom were backed up by a largely Spanish crew.

In the main photo at left, George C. Scott stands tall as the embattled general, peering out on advancing German troops and heavy armor. The following sequence, detailing the Battle of El Guettar, was filmed in one day outside Almeria in the deserts of southernmost Spain. Over 2,000 Spanish Army soldiers were outfitted in German and American uniforms, and an impressive array of vintage tanks and other military equipment was assembled to depict the respective forces. To cover the action. Koenekamp (below) deployed six of the D-150 Todd AO/Mitchell cameras, split between two units.

One aspect of *Patton* that the production's crew will always recall is how cold it got in Spain during the winter of 1969. In the August 1970 issue of *American Cinematographer*, Koenekamp told interviewer George J. Mitchell, "Our very first day of shooting was, I believe, February 2, in Rio Frio castle outside of Segovia. We were doing the scene in which Patton is having his portrait



Roman ruins in Morocco. The few stagebound sequences were primarily filmed at the Sevilla Studios in Madrid and at 20th Century Fox in Hollywood.

Fortunately, Koenekamp was able to bring in key members of his camera and lighting team from the U.S., including gaffer Gene Stout, camera operator Bill Norton and camera assistants Emilio

painted when he receives a telephone call from General Bendell Smith telling him that he has been relieved of command of the Third Army. It was around lunchtime, and Scott asked for a glass of water. A man brought him one, but when he got it, Scott found that the water had frozen!"

—David E. Williams

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Black Diffusion/FX® filters make textured surfaces look silky smooth. Great for hiding wrinkles and blemishes, without excessive highlight flaring or oversoftening.

Gold Diffusion/FX® works just as subtly, while slightly tinting shadows lighter and warmer.

Ultra Contrasts™ are the only filters that reduce contrast and give more shadow detail without producing highlight flare or reducing sharpness.

Commitment to innovation is one way Tiffen serves Vilmos and the motion picture industry—and will continue to serve them...for a long, long, long time.





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